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[“I WILL NEVER LEAVE YORKSHIRE, BLANCHE, TILL I CAN TAKE YOU WITH ME!”]

## POOR LADY BARBARA.

### CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Blanche Browne recovered from that long death-like swoon, the whole scene was changed, and she could hardly recall her last waking sensation.

She was reclining now on a soft couch drawn up close to the blazing fire, wrapped in a crimson dressing-gown trimmed with lace. Her beautiful hair fell round her like a veil of golden brown. Her feet were covered with an eiderdown quilt, while a delicious air of warmth and comfort pervaded the whole place.

The girl looked round her in surprise. She could hardly believe that Studley Grange boasted such a room. It was of moderate size and carpeted with thick, warm Brussels. There were rich crimson curtains drawn before the windows, but these were relieved by inner draperies of guipure lace. The furniture was covered in crimson damask, but there were dainty antimacassars and

pretty trifles of muslin and embroidery about.

A small brass bedstead stood in the centre of the apartment, and an open door revealed a smaller chamber furnished with toilet appliances or Blanche would have fancied herself in a drawing-room.

How had she reached this bright, cheerful place, and what had happened before she got there? Blanche put one of her thin hands to her white face and tried to collect her thoughts, but memory would not return clearly, and the only result of her attempt was that two large tears rolled slowly down her cheeks.

“You are better now.”

It was Mrs. Lenard who spoke. Her step was noiseless, her voice full of kindness, and yet poor Blanche felt a strange shudder shake her frame.

“Have I been ill?”

Memory had returned now. She recalled every taunting word of Jinks and all the horrors of the blue-rooms. How would the widow explain the imprisonment there, and her own false statement that she would see

Lady Barbara? It seemed to Blanche impossible that Mrs. Lenard had any power to explain this clearly, and till she did Blanche felt she could not trust her.

“You fainted,” said Mrs. Lenard, quietly, without the least embarrassment. “That stupid Jinks actually showed you into the indigo rooms where no one has been for years. Why, the look was hampered so that if I had not found you you might have been unable to get away. A fine fright you would have been in!”

Blanche thought she had had the fright, but she only looked straight into the widow's face, and said gravely,—

“But you told Jinks to take me to the blue-room!”

“Yes, the blue-room, not the indigo, which are in quite a different wing. I knew Lady Barbara was sitting in the blue parlour to enjoy the sunshine. It was idiotic of Jinks to make such a mistake, but she says after not having a visitor for eleven years she got confused, and we must forgive her blunder.”

“I don't like Jinks.”

A shade passed over Mrs. Lenard's face.

"Unfortunately we all have to put up with some things we don't like when living in another person's house. Lady Barbara is devoted to Jinks, who is a good creature in the main. If it comes to liking, do you suppose I like to be shut up here? Why, your coming to-day was the greatest event we have known at the Grange."

"How did you find me, Mrs. Lenard?"

"Why, I went up to Lady Barbara directly the men had left, and discovered you had never been near her. Unfortunately, she kept me three mortal hours in her room, for she gets more exacting every day, and she was annoyed and angry at the idea of strangers having got into the Grange, so I had a worse time of it than ever. The moment I could get away I went to look for you, and that silly Jinks told me where she had taken you. I assure you I felt quite angry with her, and she was frightened herself when we found you in a little crushed heap on the floor; but we picked you up and brought you here, and I hope by to-morrow you will be none the worse for your adventure."

It was a plausible story, fluently told, but it had one or two weak points, and Blanche detected them at once. Lady Barbara evidently had peculiar tastes, so she might be devoted to Jinks; but if so, that worthy would surely know her habits. On admitting Jinks honestly believed her in the indigo rooms, why then, what about the dust and dirt which reigned in those apartments? Besides, the look of the door was not hampered, it had simply been constructed so as only to open from the outside.

Blanche felt frightened. She wished herself back in London; she longed with, oh, such weary pain for the sight of Mr. Norman's kindly face. Her terrors would have died at the very sound of his voice.

Poor child! she felt in a sea of trouble. She was not suspicious. She was ready to admit the sight of unexpected visitors might have been a little overwhelming after eleven years of retirement to an over-worked servant; but she could not forget the woman's insolence. The whole thing was strange and uncanny, but, amid all her doubts, Blanche was faithful to her first conviction—the she could never like Jinks.

Mrs. Lenard rang for tea, and it was brought up promptly.

To Blanche it seemed rather an elaborate dinner than the homely repast she had been used to associate with five o'clock. There were two or three hot dishes of savoury dainties, besides biscuits, preserves, and coffee. The widow pressed her guest assiduously to eat, but Blanche had gone through too much in the last few hours to have an appetite; she said frankly she felt too strange and troubled to be hungry.

Mrs. Lenard looked at her keenly.

"You must get over that, my dear," and her eyes seemed to Blanche to read her through and through. "I understood your mother was dead. She left you, I know, to Lady Barbara's sole guardianship. Your home must be at the Grange for the next two or three years, so you had better try and make yourself contented."

"I hope I am not ungrateful; but it is all so new and strange, I never was in the country before since I was a child."

"And I suppose you were poor enough in London?"

"Poor! We worked from morning to night, and yet I can't remember ever having enough money for our daily wants. Hard work killed my mother. Mrs. Lenard, a little money would have saved her life. It is when I remember that I feel as though I could never be happy in Lady Barbara's house."

"You must try," said Mrs. Lenard, gravely; "it is a dreary life for a young girl, but I have a very pleasant sitting-room, with a piano and plenty of music. Maud sends us down a box of books every month, so you won't lack occupation, and you will see in a

very little time you will be reconciled to a country life."

"But will Lady Barbara want me to stay?" asked Blanche, reluctantly.

"She insists upon it. We had a long discussion about you, and I ventured to suggest you would find the Grange a dreary home, and that a year or two at a good school at the seaside would be the making of you; but Lady Barbara was indignant at the bare idea."

"I should not like her to send me to school, it would cost so much."

"You baby! why she is as rich as Croesus!"

"But I have no claim on her."

"None, that the law will allow," said Mrs. Lenard, pointedly; "but, nevertheless, you are her niece."

A strange flush of crimson dyed Blanche's pale face. She could not have lived her eighteen years among the outspoken daughters of toil without knowing what the friends meant.

She had known before her father was a gentleman, and her mother far beneath him in rank.

The cruel tape in which the widow had spoken seemed to convey he had betrayed as well as deserted her mother, and yet that mother had said her love was Heaven's best gift.

Blanche felt a strange lump in her throat, and said, bravely,—

"I shall never ask Lady Barbara for a shilling. I only came here because I promised my mother; but the moment I see Lady Barbara I will tell her I wish to go away. I shall never claim to be recognised as her niece."

"My dear, don't be romantic, you are her niece; and she is only doing her duty by providing for you. She might give you a very pretty fortune out of her savings, but she can't leave you Studley, the law wouldn't let her."

"I don't want it."

"I'm afraid you're a little short-tempered. You'd better accept what Lady Barbara does for you, and be grateful. She won't send you to school because she doesn't want anyone to know your parentage; but she will give you a home here until you are of age."

"When shall I see her?"

"Well, I hope to persuade her to see you soon, but—you mustn't be hasty, child. I assure you she's the gentlest creature in the world, always doing something odd. Well, at present she actually refuses to see you at all!"

"Refuse to see me at all!" echoed Blanche, in a tone of amazement.

Mrs. Lenard nodded.

"And yet she means to keep me here for two years? Mrs. Lenard, I can't make it out."

"I have given up trying to understand Lady Barbara," said the fair widow, looking hopelessly perplexed. "She is the strangest creature. She hinted that if you were like your father, it would only awaken painful associations. I think she was very fond of him long ago."

"Mother always said I was like my father. It was Dolly who took after her."

Mrs. Lenard dropped the poker she had taken up to stir the fire, making a loud clatter; perhaps the noise tried her nerves for she looked ashen white as she asked,—

"Have you a sister? I don't know how I got the idea, but I thought you were an only child?"

"So I am. Dolly died long ago, before I can remember. Mother never got over it."

"Very foolish of her!" commented Mrs. Lenard, "she should have remembered it was one month less to feed. And you are eighteen? I hope your head is not full of love and lovers, for Lady Barbara won't stand anything of that sort!"

Blanche drew herself up proudly.

"Poor people don't make acquaintance with gentlemen, Mrs. Lenard, and though I have

sold flowers in the streets I don't think I could marry any one who wasn't a gentleman; but, as it happens, it makes no difference, for I don't believe in love."

"You are a most extraordinary girl. I shall try and persuade Lady Barbara to see you, for your ideas are after her own heart. She seems most kindly disposed towards you. She says I am to send to London for anything you fancy, and that we are to spare no pains to make you happy. Only she says she cannot see you; she thinks her nerves would not stand the shock."

"Is she so very old?"

"She is under fifty, but she was always a nervous, fanciful woman, disposed to think herself an invalid, and you may imagine that the life she has led the last eleven years has tended to make her morbid."

"Why does she lead it?"

"Because she chooses, I suppose. I am sure I have worn myself to death trying to alter her. Fancy, she has not been outside her door for eleven years! I call it wicked!"

"She must be very miserable."

"She is happy enough. I think when Lady Mordaunt and Barbara came into the property, someone warned her she would be married for her money, and it turned her quite morbid on the one point. She might well be, for all the Keiths marry unfortunately. Of the three sisters not one was happy in her love affair. The youngest eloped with some lawyer's clerk, but she died very soon. The Earl never forgave her, he wouldn't even go to her funeral though Mr. Norman asked him!"

"Mr. Norman! The gentleman who brought me here to-day was called Norman? Could he be any relation?"

Mrs. Lenard looked flustered.

"Did you hear his Christian name?"

"Keith!"

"Keith Norman! And his age agrees with the shade of Lady Diana's marriage, I suppose it is her son. Well, it was very impudent of him to force his way in here, but I think we got the best of it. Lady Barbara retired even to hear what he had to say."

"I am sorry."

"And I am not," returned Mrs. Lenard, tartly. "She's done very well without any relations all this while, and she doesn't want any now. I suppose he thought it was time she made her will, and fancied he could come in for a share of her money bags. It's odious to see such greed."

"He never had such a thought," cried Blanche; "he was sent from London by Mr. Bruce. He is a great deal too generous to have any base motive."

Mrs. Lenard did not stay much longer, and the sickness of her manner quite returned before she left the room.

She told Blanche that by Lady Barbara's orders Jinks (the husband, not Mehalah) had gone down to the station for her luggage and that she herself had written to her own outfitter to send down a complete wardrobe for a young lady.

Her last words were an assurance that no expense should be spared on her dear girl's behalf, and that all required of Blanche in return was a promise never to intrude unannounced on Lady Barbara, or to leave the grounds alone.

"Of course we can't shut you up so closely as we have been shut up ourselves," said the widow, sweetly; "it would be absurd; but there is an excellent phreton in the stable, and I am not a bad whip, so sometimes when Lady Barbara can spare me I will take you for a long drive; and now, child, I must say good-night. If you are to lose those white cheeks and that thin face, you need plenty of sleep. Don't hurry up in the morning, I always breakfast with Lady Barbara, and I will tell Jinks to bring you when she comes up to light the fire. Don't stir till you've had it, and as soon as I am free I will look in to see how you feel."

Left alone Blanche did not attempt to go to bed. The luxury of the couch, the warmth of



the fire, lulled her into a kind of bodily repose. She had been travelling the whole of the previous night, and she had gone through enough since her arrival at the Grange to unbinge the strongest nerves.

She was very weary, and the immense effort at self-control she had made while speaking to Mrs. Lenard relaxed now; the tears rained down her cheeks. It seemed to her never in the days of her hardest struggles with poverty had she been so miserable.

She was calm at last. There was consolation in the thought that Mr. Norman, at least, knew of her coming to the Grange. If things went very badly with her, surely she could write and claim the friendship he had offered her.

She was happier when this idea came to her, and began to think of undressing. Indeed she had risen from the couch when the sound of voices outside her door roused her attention.

"It will be easy enough," said the silky tones she had learned to distrust. "She's nothing but a simpleton. It will be easy enough to blind her."

"She's not much sense," agreed Jinks, "but you're playing a dangerous game, ma'am, which I have told you often before; you've got the girl now which is just what you wanted, and I should say the sooner you ended things the better and safer for all of us."

"Do you know who that young man was? Another of them? Really, Jinks, there seems no end to these Keiths; they turn up on every side."

"You've waited too long," retorted the servant; "you couldn't expect to have things your own way always. You'll come to grief now unless you set to work and finish things."

Trembling in every limb Blanche crept into bed. Very little of the conversation had been comprehensible to her; but she *did* understand there was some dark secret at the Grange, and that Jinks and Mrs. Lenard were leagued together for some evil purpose.

As she closed her weary eyes the girl felt a pang of pity for her aunt. Lady Barbara's self-will could have brought her little happiness since it had estranged her from all her friends and left only such women as there to tend her declining years.

Blanche felt vaguely there was a mystery—something hidden at the Grange; but she could not even guess its nature, only she made up her mind the first time she was alone with Lady Barbara to tell her how brave and true was her kinsman—Keith Norman.

It seemed to Blanche his friendly presence would be a tower of strength to the poor enfeebled woman, whose morbid fancies had secluded her so long.

## CHAPTER VIII.

KENNETH BRUCE had started the idea of a disguise, and Keith Norman was not long in carrying it into execution.

The very day after Dr. Ward's revelations he went down to Studley completely metamorphosed, so far as his outer man went, and as the bitterly inclement weather had most conveniently given him a cold, his voice had all the hoarseness recommended by his friend, without any effort on his own part.

Still, though he felt tolerably secure of the difference between Mr. Higgins, retired merchant, and Keith Norman, lawyer, he deemed it just as well not to go to the "Manro Arms," where Mrs. Smith's attentions might trouble him, and therefore put up at the "Studley Hotel," a rival establishment of a somewhat inferior class.

He took good care to tell the landlady he might be her guest for two or three weeks, and he made most liberal arrangements for his creature comforts, so that she naturally looked on him as a desirable inmate, and so overwhelmed him with attention that he rather regretted his choice of a domicile.

Two days passed uneventfully enough. Mr. Higgins found his cold quite too bad to venture out, and as he spent his whole time at the bay window, which commanded a view of the high road from Studley Grange, considering the little there was to amuse him in the house, it seemed very sensible to try and divert his mind in that fashion; but on the third afternoon his patient watching was rewarded by the sight of a pretty phaeton, drawn by two spirited ponies and driven by Mrs. Lenard, at whose side was the girl, who, despite his antimatrimonial resolutions, had haunted his peace ever since he first saw her.

But, oh, how she was altered. He had left her the week before a little shabby girl, bearing about her every mark of poverty. He saw now an elegant young lady, dressed in a softly falling cashmere, half covered with erape, and a small cloth jacket trimmed with fur, while a far toques sat coquettishly on her golden brown hair.

Surely they were both changed; but Keith felt dimly the change was not in his favour, for while he had passed from a "gentleman" to a "person," she had developed from a grub to a butterfly. He half thought he liked her better in the chrysalis state, and yet it was hard to find fault with anything so fair and graceful as the picture she now presented. Evidently they were good to her so far as externals went; but was she happy? Somehow, in that brief glimpse of her, he thought not.

Despite his cold, Mr. Higgins took his hat, and braving the east wind, went out into the village street. He had not walked far before he came up with the phaeton waiting outside the post-office.

Mrs. Lenard had gone inside, leaving the ponies in her friend's care. Keith looked right and left cautiously, but there was not a creature about.

The Studley post-office, like many another rural one, consisted of the front room of a small cottage. As the window was veiled with a black tulle blind, and the door was closed on account of the cold, it seemed unlikely Mrs. Lenard could keep a watch on Blanche's actions from within, especially as a long strip of garden divided the cottage from the road.

As the postmaster was profoundly stupid, and very deaf, the odds were he would detain the fair widow some time.

Keith grasped all these facts in an instant. The next moment he was at the side of the phaeton.

"Blanche!"

She was his cousin. He had thought of her continually all these days. He had made up his mind, so firmly to be her protector and champion that he had well-nigh forgotten she had only seen him once, and perhaps regarded him as a stranger. She looked at him in such bewilderment that his disguise flashed upon him, and he saw she never guessed that the middle-aged Mr. Higgins was really her late travelling companion.

"Have you forgotten Keith Norman?"

"No, oh, no! But—"

"He is beside you. Blanche, I dare not attempt to explain things to you now, but believe me, this disguise is necessary, and trust me that I have a strong motive for the deception."

"I do trust you," said Blanche, faintly;

"but, oh, if Mrs. Lenard sees you."

"She cannot hurt me."

"You don't know," and Blanche's voice trembled. "Sometimes I think she hates you."

"If she sees us together you are directing me the way to Netheriton. As for her hatred I think I prefer it to her good will. Now, child, I implore you to speak frankly. Tell me, are you happy at Studley Grange?"

To his dismay she burst into tears.

"Oh, Mr. Norman take me away. I have tried to be contented there. I have, indeed, but I am so frightened. I feel as though the Grange were full of mysteries."

"Why, what's the matter? Aren't they kind to you?"

"Yes, but—"

"Try and tell me," he urged. "Blanche, I have a great deal to ask you. I believe that you can help me to right the wrongs of one very dear to Mr. Bruce, but I *must* know first about yourself. Don't you like Lady Barbara?"

"It is all so strange," she whispered. "I have never seen Lady Barbara! They won't even let me go past her rooms!"

"And where are they?"

"In the west wing. I did go by one night, but it was quite by accident. I lost my way; it is such a large rambling old place, you know."

"I know," he said, hurriedly. "Go on Blanche, you went past her room, and what happened? Did you see Lady Barbara? Did you hear her speak?"

"No; but—"

"My dear child speak out. More hangs on this than you can guess. Don't you know that you are Lady Barbara's niece?"

"Mrs. Lenard says the law would never allow that! That really I have no relations."

Keith's hand closed over the girl's. He understood the taunt that had been levelled at the poor child.

"Listen to me, Blanche. I saw Dr. Ward last week. He is an old friend of Mr. Bruce, and he was partly in your mother's confidence. He told us what I had guessed already, that you are indeed the daughter of my uncle, Viscount Keith. Perhaps your poor mother was threatened and frightened into never claiming her rights, but you are indeed and truth the Honourable Blanche Keith, and the proofs of your birth are in Lady Barbara's keeping. I would take you away with me to-night. I would place you under Mr. Bruce's protection, for your grandfather's sake I know he would be ready to receive you; but, Blanche, you owe a duty to yourself, and to your mother's memory. You ought to have the proofs of your parentage, for the sake of being able to clear your mother's name from the faintest shadow. Can you be brave and stay on at Studley until you have seen Lady Barbara?"

"I will try."

"Remember, I shall be at the Studley Hotel, and I will come to you at any time if you need me. Blanche, I believe firmly there is mischief going on at the Grange! I believe some danger threatens Lady Barbara. I cannot, as you know, get an entry into the house and watch all that goes on day by day; but you are there and I believe if Lady Barbara only sees you once, you will win her confidence. It is a hard task, Blanche. I wish I could take it from you, but I can't. Tell me, are you brave enough to bear the daily annoyance of your present life with such an end in view?"

The girl raised her head. In spite of poverty and hardship, in spite of a life spent among working people, she carried herself with all the dignity of her race. The beautiful eyes flashed with the old spirit of the Keiths. She looked like the child of a hundred Earls as she gave her answer.

"I will never leave the Grange until I have seen Lady Barbara, or you tell me the task is hopeless—but, oh, Mr. Norman, I shall never forget what I felt when I passed those rooms."

Again he pressed her hand.

"You need never be afraid of your aunt, Blanche. Mr. Bruce describes her as the kindest of women; the old family doctor declares he never met any one less likely to go out of her mind. Lady Barbara may be peculiar and eccentric, but, believe me, she is neither cruel nor mad. What did you hear?"

"I heard a low moaning as though someone was in great pain, so I tried to get in to help them, but the door was locked, and I saw Jinks coming. Then I was so frightened I ran away."

"Didn't you tell anyone?" asked Keith, feeling half disappointed in her that she had not even tried to procure relief for the sufferer.

"Of course I did," answered Blanche, indignantly. "I went straight to Mrs. Lenard, and asked her to let me go into the pink room (all the rooms are called after the colour of the furniture, and the doors are painted outside in the same colour, so you see I couldn't be mistaken, I *know* it was the pink room."

"What did Mrs. Lenard say?"

"At first she was very angry, and said I had no right to fancy such a thing. Then she said I was hysterical, and the long dark passages had frightened me. She would take me to the pink room herself in the morning, and then I could see for myself there was no one there."

"Did you go?"

"Directly after breakfast she unlocked the door herself, and it was just as she said, there was not a creature there; but, Mr. Norman, I am *sure* I did really hear the moaning, and I have never been able to forget it since. Whenever I am alone I seem to hear it again. I told Mrs. Lenard only this morning I should like to go away; she has been very kind to me, but I would rather go back to London, even if I had to sell flowers in the street, than stay here!"

"You shall never sell flowers in the streets, Blanche. I would take you to Mr. Bruce this very night, but in so doing I cut off the last chance of discovering the mystery of the Grange. Blanche, can you be brave and stay?"

"I will stay."

"I suppose it would be of no use writing to you?"

She shook her head.

"But you will write to me?"

She shivered.

"I don't think you would ever have my letters—not while everything is as it is now. Mrs. Lenard and I go out two or three times a week, and we *always* go through the village. If anything happens that we don't come you will know there is something wrong. Mrs. Lenard never lets anyone post her letters, so the old man could always tell you when she stopped coming."

"I don't like leaving you there," and he sighed, "but I see no help for it. Blanche, I want you to tell me something. What did your mother say to you about Lord Landale?"

In a very few words he told her the story of Lady Joan, and his own deep conviction that she was Blanche's elder sister. Blanche listened eagerly.

"It would explain all," she said, gravely. "Mother always spoke of Dolly as though she were alive, but, oh, how terrible for her to lose her father, her home, and her name at one blow!"

"It is for her sake, Blanche, as well as yours, that I want you to stay here, and try to find the proofs of your birth. If only we can prove she is Lord Keith's daughter that cruel woman won't be able to taunt her with being nobody's child. She will have a name as old as the one she loses."

"Do you like her very much?" asked Blanche, wistfully. "Is she so very, very pretty?"

"She is more than pretty, she is beautiful, and she has a brave, helpful spirit. I owe all my prospects in life to her father. For Lord Landale's sake I would leave no stone unturned to make Joan happy."

Blanche concluded they were lovers. The child gave a half unconscious sigh. It was hard that her unknown sister's fate should be so much brighter than her own, but there was a world of generosity and self-sacrifice in the little wail.

She was not jealous of her sister's happiness, and after all that happiness depended in a measure on her.

"She would be quite brave now, she would bear all the gloom and mystery of Studley

Grange cheerfully, for she had her work to do. She must find the proof of her sister's parentage, and remove the barrier which divided her from Keith. Perhaps, when they two were married, if Lady Barbara were indeed the kind woman Mr. Norman thought her, Blanche might spend her life not so sadly after all with her aunt.

"What did Mrs. Lenard say when you spoke of leaving the Grange?" demanded Keith.

"She said Lady Barbara would never let me go, and that I could not leave without her consent before I was twenty-one, because my mother had given me to her."

"You are quite sure they are kind to you?" persisted Keith, "even with so much at stake I would not leave you there if you were ill-treated."

"They are perfectly kind to me, but they watch me every minute. I am never alone; if Mrs. Lenard leaves me Jinks comes in and begins to dust or something, and they look my door every night regularly."

Keith could well believe it.

"I was in despair," said Blanche, tremulously, "for I have no money, not even a penny stamp, and they won't give me any paper to write letters. Oh, Mr. Norman! when you go back to London, won't you please go and see Dr. Ward, and tell him why I have not written to him. He is so good and kind, I couldn't bear for him to think me ungrateful."

"He shall never think that, child. I don't know how much longer I shall have to stay in Studley. It may be days, or weeks; but even if it is months, I shall never leave Yorkshire until I can take you with me."

"But my task?"

"Depend upon it, Blanche, the chance of seeing Lady Barbara will come sooner than you think. It is impossible you can both live in the same house long without meeting. One interview will show you whether her seclusion is really her own will, one talk with her will settle the question of your birth. If the old lady is really leading this hermit life to please herself, it would be cruel to waste your bright youth in staying at the Grange? If not—"

"If not!" asked Blanche.

"If there is mischief at work, depend upon it you will soon find proof of it, then tell me. You say you drive out two or three times a week, and always in the afternoon, from three to five. Blanche, I shall always be on watch at the window. We dare not hope for such another long talk as this has been, but remember, one word will do, or less. You are in deep mourning, the slightest trace of white in your dress would be visible, even from my window. If you find there is evil going on at the Grange, fasten a pocket-handkerchief round your neck, it will be safer than trusting to a meeting. I shall look out for the phaeton, and the day I see the white token I shall go straight to the Grange and insist on seeing you, for I shall know either that you are in trouble yourself, or that there are dark doings surrounding Lady Barbara. Be easy, Blanche; if you find your task beyond your strength, if you are in any trouble or danger, remember the white token, and it will bring me to you at once."

Blanche never asked him *how* he would achieve her deliverance, *how* he would get inside the Grange, she trusted him utterly and entirely. True, she had met him but once before, but there are some women so true themselves they know by instinct when they meet anyone worthy of their trust, and give that trust at once freely and for ever. So it had been with Blanche.

"Keep up your courage," said Keith, with a long pressure of her little hand. "You know I promised to be your friend before I even guessed you were my cousin. If things go wrong, if danger threatens you, just remember John Higgins is staying at the Studley Hotel, and that his aid can be relied on just as surely as though he called himself Keith Norman. And wore his own hair and complexion. Tell me, did I frighten you very much, Blanche?"

"Just a little."

"Well, I fear Mrs. Lenard's interview with the deaf old postmaster must be coming to an end, so I'll be off. Courage, Blanche."

But though he walked off at a brisk pace, he was not quick enough to escape Mrs. Lenard's observation. She had been standing with the cottage door in her hand, and had caught a glimpse of a tall dark man talking to her charge.

"Who was that?" she asked, in a much less sugared tone than usual, as she took the reins from Blanche's hands. "I should have thought you would know better than to speak to strange men in the roads. I can tell you I won't have any followers at the Grange. Lady Barbara has given you a home, but she won't have any followers dancing after you. I am ashamed of you."

Blanche flushed with wounded feeling.

"I have no wish to ask that gentleman to the Grange. He wanted to know the way to Netherton, and I told him. I had no thought of speaking to him before he asked me that."

"Is he a friend of yours?"

"I never saw him before he came to Studley."

"You seemed in eager conversation. I'm sure I should have thought he was a very old friend."

"I have no very old friends," returned Blanche, feeling thoroughly uncomfortable. "And if I did have a little chat with him, you know I have very few people to talk to at the Grange."

"As many as you had in London, I imagine."

"I had my mother there."

"Well, she wasn't much to boast of!" said Mrs. Lenard, scornfully. "You're much better off now; your mother would have been a disgrace to you."

"My mother was Lady Keith," said Blanche, rather defiantly, for, gentle as she was, the taunts had roused her spirit, "and I loved her dearly; she had nothing to be ashamed of."

Mrs. Lenard shrugged her shoulders.

"I fancy you'd find it very difficult to prove she was 'Lady Keith,' or she'd not have been content to call herself plain Mrs. Browne; but I don't want to quarrel with you, child, since it pleases Lady Barbara for you to be here. I'm sure you ought to be very grateful to her."

"I am not."

"More shame for you! Just think of all the things she has bought for you."

"But she doesn't love me, she won't even see me."

"Why do you want to see her? a cranky, discontented invalid: you ought to be grateful to her for not turning you into a sick nurse. I'm sure I've been little else all these years."

"I am used to illness," said Blanche, gently, for she felt she had been unkind in speaking of her unknown aunt, "and I think I could help you take care of Lady Barbara, and wait on her if she would only let me try."

Poor Barbara Keith! It was no question, of her letting Blanche wait on her; perhaps for an instant even Mrs. Lenard's hardened conscience felt a pang as she remembered how different was the real case from what she represented it.

They drove home—if that large dreary house deserved the name—quickly. Promptly at five o'clock they reached the lodge gate, where Mr. Jinks was in waiting to admit them, and take charge of the phaeton and ponies. There was a private way to the house from the back of the lodge which Mrs. Lenard always used; it was fairly well kept and carefully weeded—very different from the toilsome way by which Blanche had first approached the Grange; it was along this path that the widow now led her to the house.

Blanche was very quiet, for she had much to think of; she no longer wished to leave the Grange, for she had work to do there. With her it rested to remove the barrier which divided Keith Norman and her beautiful unknown sister. In spite of the contrast



between that sister's fate and her own the girl's heart felt lighter than it had been since she first saw the inside of the Grange. She was no longer lonely and deserted now; she was not given over body and soul to the powers of Mrs. Lenard and Mehalah Jinks for her friend was still in Studley, and had promised he would not leave it until he took her with him.

(To be continued.)

## WHEN SHALL WE TWO MEET AGAIN?

—:—

### CHAPTER XIII.—(continued.)

CYRILLA was the first to remember the part she had to play, and she made a desperate effort after composure. Her voice shook a little as she said, quietly, looking at Verreker instead of Treherne,—

"Only want to know how Wilfred Romer is. Is Lord Wildgrave here?"

"Yes, just inside; would you like to speak to him?" the rector said, wondering why Treherne stood there without a word.

"I should like to tell him how we both felt for him," she said, hesitatingly, remembering her husband's injunctions, and yet longing wildly to get away before she betrayed herself by look or word.

Verreker looked at Treherne, and wondered what had become of his manners. He did not know what a superhumam effort he had to make before he could force himself to do his duty as a courteous host.

After what seemed an uncomfortably long pause, Treherne turned to Lady Dacre, with a grave bow, and led the way to his own room, where Romer was already lying in his bed, with his father standing beside him.

The boy's fair face was deathly pale, and there were already dark circles under his large, wistful eyes, but he looked up with a faint smile, as soon as he saw who the visitor was, and said, in a slightly husky voice,—

"I'm all right, thank you, Lady Dacre, but Mr. Treherne has asked me to stay with him to-night, just for a lark."

"Yes, Mr. Treherne has been kindness itself," said Lord Wildgrave, with heartfelt gratitude. "I can never repay him for what he has done to-day. But I have told Warner that I can never trust him again; he shall have his month's wages and go."

"No, father! You must punish me, not him," and Wilfred's face flushed. "It was all my fault; I made him go, though Warner said you wouldn't like it, and was in an awful funk."

"He knew his duty, and failed to do it," said the Viscount, severely.

"But hasn't he been punished enough?" and Cyrilla looked up at Lord Wildgrave with a pleading smile. "Think what he must have suffered when he thought that he would never be able to bring your boy home."

"That's right, Lady Dacre; father couldn't resist you if he tried," cried Wilfred, eagerly. "And, Mr. Treherne, won't you say a word for the poor fellow, too?"

Treherne raised his head in answer to the boy's appeal, and the Viscount wondered why the young fellow's good-looking face should look so stern and sad.

"Perhaps Lord Wildgrave will manage to keep Warner to wait upon you indoors," he said, slowly, "and get you another servant who will be able to ride a horse or sail a boat; there must be plenty of men who can do both."

"Yes, that will be the plan!" and the boy's eyes shone with pleasure. "Father! you agree, don't you?"

The Viscount gave an unwilling consent, but there was nothing on earth he could have refused his son at the moment.

Cyrilla put her cool white hand on the boy's heated forehead.

"If I were your doctor, Wilfred, I should tell you to shut your eyes and go to sleep."

"I'm not a bit bad; I'm only staying here because it's so jolly to be with Mr. Treherne. You will tell them, won't you," appealing to him earnestly, as the colour rushed into his transparent cheek. "I wasn't funky, was I? I behaved as a Roman ought?"

The old winning smile came back to Treherne's face, as he answered the boy quickly:

"You were as plucky as you could be, and any father might be proud of you."

The tears rushed into the boy's eyes, and his lips quivered like a girl's.

"You hear that, father? You will tell mother and Hilda that I didn't show the white feather?"

"They won't need to be told," said the Viscount, gruffly, for he could scarcely control his voice.

"I mustn't wait," said Cyrilla, softly; "but is there nothing we could do for you? Could we send anything over from Mountsorrel?" not daring to look at any one but the Viscount, as she asked the question of Treherne.

"Thank you, Lady Dacre!"—how he hated to say that name, the name of the man who had stolen her from him. "Everything that is needed will be sent from the Castle; Lady Wildgrave will know better than any one else what is necessary for her son."

Treherne spoke with cold gravity, as if addressing a stranger whom he disliked.

And Lord Wildgrave was astonished at his tone.

Little did he guess that one minute later, as Lady Dacre's dress brushed against his coat, it sent a thrill through every nerve in his body, though his face showed no sign of emotion.

Cyrilla stopped at the open doorway, where she stood transfixed by a glorious beam of light from the setting sun.

"Good-bye, Mr. Treherne," she said very coldly, because of the effort she was making to seem unmoved.

"She does not recognise me," thought Treherne in the bitterness of his heart. "She's a Dacre of Mountsorrel, and I'm an unknown nobody."

And his "Good-evening, Lady Dacre," out-did hers in frigidity by several degrees.

It was the Rector who saw Cyrilla to her carriage, and made polite speeches to the Baronet, whose temper was not improved by the delay. He was asked to dine at Mountsorrel, and accepted, because he thought that it would make things pleasanter for Lady Dacre if there were a third party present to keep a check on her husband's disagreeable tongue.

Paul Verreker was one of the most unselfish men that ever lived; and took a delight in acting the part of a buffer between some weak defenceless person and the rough knocks and joltings of the world. Lady Dacre was his ideal of all that was most sweet and womanly, and not knowing her story, he often wondered what had induced her to throw herself away on such a man as Sir Thomas, whose fierce temper was written in unmistakable characters across his harsh features.

She was the ministering angel of the parish, as well as the most constant attendant at the daily services of the picturesque little church where the Dacres had worshipped for century after century; therefore he was constantly meeting her.

They had grown to be great friends, but he always felt that he knew nothing of her inner life; and he was convinced that he never would till he knew what it was that had taken the joyous ring out of her laugh, and given that wistful sadness to her lovely eyes.

Treherne watched the party drive off in the carriage; saw Gordon standing in earnest conversation with a constable, and, thankful to find himself free from observation for the minute, cast off his mask of coldness and indifference as he threw himself into a chair

and buried his face on his folded arms as they rested on the table.

He had been wound up to the highest pitch of mental tension by his race with death against the winds and waves, by his meeting with his unconscious enemy, as well as by his meeting with his unconscious first and only love.

Now the inevitable re-action set in, and he sank to the very depths of dejection. Life seemed not worth the trouble of living, work seemed useless, and all endeavour vain. Why should he work like a nigger, when he would not care a straw for wealth if he earned it, and had no one to leave it to when he died?

The door opened, and Lord Wildgrave came out of the bedroom. At sight of Treherne he stopped still in shocked surprise, and was on the point of slipping back again, when the white head was raised, and eager compassion made him stay.

Treherne stood up at once, and tried, as he passed his hand across his forehead, to look like his usual self.

The Viscount went up to him, and laid his hand kindly on his shoulder.

"Don't think me impertinent," he began with some embarrassment, "but from the first moment I saw you I knew you had some trouble of your own; and I just want to say, if ever there comes a time in your life when a friend can be of use, remember here I am—to stand by you, if necessary, against the whole world. Don't forget it, or I won't forgive you!"

"Thanks! I won't forget, not likely; Gordon is the only friend I have over here," he said, with a smile, as he grasped Lord Wildgrave's hand.

"Then I insist upon being number two. And you won't shut yourself up as a hermit? You will let us see you at the Castle every now and then?"

"You are very good," dropping his eyes, and flushing slightly; "but I'm a selfish, unsociable bear, not fit for any society but my own."

"Not a bit of it," and Lord Wildgrave looked amused. "That's all humbug. If you are a bear, come and be tamed. You've got hold of my boy's heart, and he won't let you slip in a hurry."

"I shall always be delighted to see him here. Is he asleep?" moving towards the bedroom door, as if to end the conversation.

"No; but if I'm there he will talk, and I know he ought to be quiet. I don't think he could have caught a chill," said the father, anxiously. "Thanks to you, we got him to bed like a shot."

"Oh, no; he'll get over this all right. He's a capital little fellow, isn't he?—as plucky as he can be."

"Yes; he was always like that, afraid of nothing. Ah! here's the doctor," in a tone of relief, as Gordon appeared with Dr. Adams. "So glad to see you, doctor," shaking hands cordially with the worthy little man. "Just come in and tell me that there's nothing to fear for my boy. You know what has happened?"

"Yes; the Colonel told me. How do, Mr. Treherne? Still in your wet things, I declare! Was there nobody to take care of a good-looking young fellow like you?" and with a shake of the head, Dr. Adams disappeared into the bedroom.

"Now, for goodness sake, go and change," said Gordon, anxiously, "or we shall be having you laid up with rheumatic fever."

"Now, don't talk as if I were as delicate as that poor boy in there," said Treherne, impatiently; "but just tell me what you thought of my meeting with the old friend down there?"

"Very dramatic. A capital scene for Drury Lane," dryly.

"Don't you think I was right? You didn't expect me to touch his confounded hand?" in surprise.

"I don't know what I expected, but you

ought to have done it, lad. Do you know," lowering his voice cautiously, "that human ferret has been badgering Cook at the station about your luggage? If he had but the sense to ask one of my servants what day you arrived it might make it very awkward for us. There's that whole night missing, and how would you account for it?"

"If he dares to cross-question me I'll send him flat on his back!" his eyes flashing.

"That sort of thing doesn't answer in England."

The Colonel looked so truly troubled, that Treherne's heart smote him.

"All right, old fellow," slapping him on the back, "I'll behave better next time; but I felt as if I must have my fling to-day, cost what it might!"

"Cost what it might!" Gordon repeated, with a shrug of his shoulders, and then, after a pause, he added: "You shouldn't have told Benson that you came over in the same ship as Trevanion. If that fellow has been down to Southampton, and if he took it into his cursed head to ask a question or two about it, of course the captain would tell him that there was no one of the name of Treherne on board."

"But the *Silver Star* wouldn't be there."

"She's lying in dock at the present moment, and Smith has been over there talking to the captain," bringing his fist down on the table to emphasise the importance of the fact.

Treherne was not easily dismayed, but he could not help feeling slightly uncomfortable.

"You don't say so," he exclaimed; "it's rather alarming, but how on earth did you find this out?"

"Because I've been watching Smith on my own account, but when he takes to watching you it will be all U. P. Well, doctor, what account of your patient?" with a sudden change of tone, as the doctor came out of the bedroom.

"I've given him a draught; with that and a good night's rest I hope to see him quite himself to-morrow," said Dr. Adams, cheerfully, "and I've told Lord Willgrave he can go home without the smallest anxiety."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### IN THE LION'S DEN.

"Mr. Smith is waiting for you, Sir Thomas, in the library," said the new butler, respectfully, as soon as the Baronet alighted at his own door.

"Then let Mr. Smith wait," growled his master, as he walked through the hall, leaning on Mr. Verreker's arm. "I am not going to be bothered by any man alive until I've had my dinner."

"Shall I go to him and see what he wants?" Cyrilla asked, with one foot already on the first step of the stairs.

"No! You would only be too glad to send him about his business!" in a tone that grated on the rector's ears. "As for myself, I'm fagged to death, and chilled to the bone, and I can't attend to anything till to-morrow. May-hew," to the butler, "ask Mr. Smith to be good enough to look round to-morrow morning, and let somebody show Mr. Verreker to his room."

As he went slowly up the stairs he had half a mind to send for the detective to his dressing-room, and if he had done so, he would probably in his present state of irritation against Treherne, have lent a willing ear to any suggestion against him; but he was accustomed to consider his own comfort before everything else, and this habit of self-indulgence caused him to lose his first opportunity for satisfying his revenge.

The next day he was taken seriously ill through a chill caught from standing so long in a high wind, and Lady Dacre sternly refused to let him be worried by anything in the shape of business.

But the danger was only postponed, not

averted, for as soon as Sir Thomas felt well enough to re-assert his will and remember his revenge, he would certainly send for the detective, and listen most eagerly to his suggestions.

Gordon's anxiety increased as the days passed on, and he felt as if he were watching a friend taking an afternoon stroll over ground that was likely to open under his feet.

He prevailed upon Treherne to go and leave a card at Mountsorrell one day when he knew that Cyrilla was out.

It was indescribably painful to him to ride up to the front door, with its grey marble pillars supporting a handsome portico, but he felt as if it would have been utterly impossible for him to go into the drawing-room, where he had that last parting with his Cyril.

"How is Sir Thomas?" he asked, hoarsely; then put his card into the butler's hand, and turned quickly away, forgetting to wait for an answer.

But he had not gone far down the old familiar path which led to Woodlands, when John the footman ran after him, and shouted out:

"Sir Thomas's compliments, and he would like to see you, sir!"

Treherne flushed, and drew his brows together in an ominous frown.

"I can't stop—great hurry," he began, and then he thought of Gordon, and the great anxiety he would cause him by his refusal, and muttered, "all right, I'll come."

It required a desperate effort to go back into the house which had once been his second home, but the poor fellow was beginning to be accustomed to mental pain of every sort by this time, and he only looked a degree sterner than usual, when he stood before his enemy as he lay stretched out on a sofa.

He knew that he ran an enormous risk as he sat down bareheaded in full view of Sir Thomas's sharp eyes, and perhaps the remembrance of his danger helped him through the interview more than anything else, by supplying an under current of excitement to the scene.

He did contrive to sit back to the light, and bore with admirable composure the first keen glance that the Baronet cast at him from under his bushy eyebrows.

If he had flinched for a moment, Sir Thomas's suspicions would have aroused, but he sat there with stern composure, talking of the mine, the capital trout stream at Woodlands, and any topic that chanced to turn up, giving to everything some of the freshness of his own original mind.

The Baronet did look at him hard once or twice, as some fleeting fancy of recognition passed through his mind only to be dismissed at once.

The white hair gave a strange look to Treherne's otherwise youthful face, but it did not spoil his beauty in the least. Sir Thomas was charmed with him, and when he got up from his chair with the remark that he must hurry back to Wilfred Romer, he said, regretfully,—

"I wish you wouldn't hurry away, and pray remember in the future that there is an invalid here who wants you much more than that boy. I daresay he has a whole lot of his people over continually to look after him."

"His mother has been over to see him; but he has taken an odd fancy to me. I can't think why. Good-bye, Sir Thomas," moving towards the door, "I hope you will soon be about again."

"Look here, Treherne, I've taken an odd fancy to you, I can't think why," with a short laugh, "and I shall take it as a favour if you'll look in for a chat whenever you can."

"You've Gordon and Verreker, you can't want me," turning as he stood by the open door.

"Verreker's a prig and a parson, and Gordon's—"

"The best fellow that ever stepped," interrupting him, indignantly.

"Yes, but I know all his stories, and I want

something fresh. Just drop in, you know, whenever you feel inclined."

"I'm an awfully busy man."

"Nonsense, you waste all your time on that young Romer or his pretty sister, which is it?" with a twinkle in his eye.

"Miss Romer comes over to see her brother," haughtily, "which is a relief to my mind, as I can't keep away from the mine for anybody."

"But you are coming to see me again?" with strange persistency.

"If you are alone and Lady Dacre is out," very grudgingly, "send for me if you want me, and I'll come if I can."

"That's a promise, remember!" the Baronet called out triumphantly, as Treherne shut the door behind him.

The staircase was very dark, for the red blinds were all pulled down to shut out the sun, but he knew every step so well, and he was in such a hurry to get out of the house that he ran down the stairs as if he were pursued by a mad bull, and came full tilt against a golden-haired girl who was coming up them at a very different pace.

She gave an exclamation, and started back very nearly falling backwards down the stairs.

Treherne caught her hands in his—and enabled her to recover her balance, and thus they stood, each looking into the other's face for one long minute in the dim light.

Provisionally it was so dark that he could not distinguish the expression in Cyrilla's eyes—veiled as they were by their long lashes, but she could see the passionate glance that shot from his as he looked into the sweet face which had caused the ruin of his life, and it made her shake from head to foot.

He bent his head over those tiny clinging hands one moment, and then without a word, led her gently down to the next landing. If he had spoken one single sentence she knew that he must have betrayed himself, and then who could tell what might have followed from a man's sudden weakness?

As he dashed down the stairs, and out through the open door, he knew that she must think him a strange, unconventional boor, without better manners than those of a clodhopper, but better than that she should know that it was he, Ralph Trevanion, living close outside her gates, which would poison the pleasure of every walk or drive, and make havoc of her peaceful life.

He got on his horse, which a groom was holding, and rode off with a face as white as his own shirt collar. Oh! by that one false step of hiding close at hand under a feigned name—he had got into such a mesh as he could not possibly extricate himself from!

He cursed himself for his own folly, and reached the Tower, looking so stern that Wilfred Romer, who was lying on a sofa under an old thorn, looked up at him wistfully, as if to ask what was the matter.

Hilda Romer, a lovely girl of sixteen, with radiant, auburn hair, and bright hazel eyes, sprang up from the grass, and called out in her sweet, ringing voice,—

"Here you are at last, Mr. Treherne! We thought you were never coming. It was wicked of you to be so long!"

"I'd a thousand times rather have been here," as he got off his horse, which was led away by Weston, his factotum. "Have you taken great care of Wilfred?"

"Yes, I made him have that rag over him, though he said it was fearfully hot. And now do look and see what I've done for you," watching his face with eager eyes.

A flower bed had been cut out of the grass, close against the walls of the Tower, and filled with geraniums and heliotropes; whilst a Gloire de Dijon rose had been carefully trained round the window of Treherne's favourite den.

"My dear child! Did you do all this yourself?" he exclaimed in surprise. "How awfully good of you!"



"And you like it really?"

"Like it? of course I do. It makes all the difference in the world. How can I thank you enough?"

Hilda's face flushed with pleasure.

"Don't thank me at all. Bob did the work, I helped, and Will looked on. Bob drove over in the farm-cart and brought all the plants, and some proper soil, so I think they will live," very anxiously.

"I'm sure they will," with his winning smile.

"And now you are to have the first rose," she said, running to the prettiest bud, and picking it ruthlessly, and with a smile and a blush: "I'm going to put it into your coat."

"You do me too much honour," in his most deferential manner, which perhaps was intended as a slight check on the girl's impulsiveness.

It did not turn her from her purpose, but it seemed to stop her tongue, for she was quite silent whilst she was putting the flower in his button-hole, and her colour deepened fast as he looked down into the flower-like face upturned in its glowing youth to his.

"You wouldn't be so ready to do this for me if you were an 'out' young lady," he said with a smile, as he threw himself down on the grass by Wilfred's side.

"I wouldn't do it now if you hadn't white hair," she returned, quickly, as she hurriedly put on her riding-gloves.

"You little goose," cried Wilfred. "Do you think Treherne's an old man?"

"Miss Romer doesn't trouble her head about me," said Treherne, hastily. "Must you go? Do you want your pony?"

As she nodded he drew a silver whistle out of his pocket and whistled twice.

"Mother says this is the prettiest spot in the world, and she'll never forgive father for not buying it before Colonel Gordon. But I'm so glad he didn't," said Wilfred, stretching out his thin fingers to play with Treherne's soft white hair.

The latter leant his head against one of the cushions of the sofa.

"Why are you glad, Will?"

"Because then I should never have known you," a light breaking across the boyish face, Treherne turned and looked at him with his sunniest smile.

"Would that have mattered much—except to me?"

"You don't know what you are to me!" seizing hold of his shoulder, and gripping it hard, whilst the colour rushed into his cheeks. "I—I don't know how I ever got on without you. Hil! come and tell him how we love him!"

The girl stood before him in her old brown habit, her bright face glowing; her eyes shining like two stars.

"I love you with my whole heart and soul, Mr. Treherne, and I always shall," she said with passionate emphasis, "because you saved my brother."

Treherne stood up with flushed face.

"You are too good to me, Miss Romer. Any other man would have done the same."

"Don't, 'Miss Romer,' me," stamping with vexation. "I'm not an 'out' young lady, as you said yourself just now. Call me 'Hil,' as Will always does."

He shook his head, and laughed.

"I daren't, what would Lady Wildgrave say?"

"She would say I was a child, and nothing mattered. Do," coming a step nearer, and laying her hand upon his arm, whilst she raised the prettiest pair of pleading eyes to his. "Do, or I shall think you don't like me."

"You couldn't think that!" shaking his head.

"I shall think you hate me!"

"I defy you to do that! I'm not a lunatic. Listen, dear child," very gravely. "If I presumed to call you by your Christian name your father would think me an insufferable

cad, and never let you come near the Tower again? Do you want that to happen?"

"No; not for the world!" with emphasis.

"I'll call Wilfred 'Will,' and he shall call me 'Ronald' if he likes."

"Ronald, is that your name? I shall think of you always as Ronald, it's so awfully nice. Good-bye, Ronald," with a saucy smile.

"Good-bye, dear old Will!" hugging him.

"I shall have a heap of things to do to-morrow, so I shall come over early. We must work like navvies whilst Mr. Treherne's at the mine. You are not coming with me. I won't have you," as Jim, her Shetland pony, and Robin Hood were led out together.

"You must put up with me. It is just the time when some of the men leave off work; and, if you will allow me the honour," with a laughing but most deferential bow, "I will see you at least through Broadbent?"

"I can't bear to trouble you," looking as pleased as Punch.

## CHAPTER XV.

KITTY CARNEW: BY ALL THE POWERS!

THE young people from the Castle cast a ray of sunshine across Treherne's life, which gave a new light to his eyes, and restored his happy laugh.

He was obliged to give up looking sad, because Wilfred Romer always watched him with such wistful eyes, as if he were longing to ask what was the matter, and act the part of a comforter.

The Colonel was ever a welcome addition to the party; but Hilda, instead of humbly worshipping him, which was her attitude with Ronald, made him her complete slave.

If Gordon happened to appear whilst Treherne was absent at the mine, he was pressed into the work, and made to fetch and carry as if he were no older than Bob, the gardener's boy.

The old soldier, with his innate craving for affection, enjoyed it all thoroughly; and every now and then, when his partner came back from a hard day's work amongst his men, he found the head manager digging as hard as a gardener paid by the job, in the uncultivated ground round the Tower, when he would not have thought of even raking a border in the well-kept gardens at Woodlands.

The lovely ferns which grow so luxuriantly in the open air in Devonshire were transplanted from their haunts by the side of silvery torrents; or the silence of the woods, and made to beautify a romantic little nook, where busy hands had placed a rustic seat in full view of the sea.

Hilda was perfectly indefatigable, and Wilfred, as he regained his strength, managed to help a little, and was at all times an eager looker-on.

"And now, Ronald, you must have your family banner run upon that old flagstaff," suggested Wilfred, when the wilderness had been turned into a picturesque garden, and there really seemed nothing else to do.

Ronald Treherne shook his head.

It would create a sensation, indeed, if the arms of the Trevanions were floated on every breeze that blew over Broadbent's wild moors.

"Not I, Will. Don't you know that all this place belongs to the Colonel? But it wouldn't be a bad idea to have a flag which could be lowered if any disaster happened to the mine."

"But I thought there couldn't be an accident in a silver-lead mine?" exclaimed Hilda, breathlessly. "Oh, please never, never work in it again!"

"Why shouldn't I as well as any of those men?" with a smile. "I've nobody on earth belonging to me. I could be spared better than most."

"Why do you talk like that?" she cried, passionately. "Do you want to drive me wild?"

He looked at her in surprise for her breast

was heaving, and two large tears were hurrying down her cheeks.

They were practically alone, for Colonel Gordon and Wilfred had walked to the other end of the lawn, and these two were standing together in the quaint porch, over which were hanging the roses which Hilda's hands had planted.

Treherne was inexpressibly touched, yet bewildered as to how he ought to act. She was child enough not to be ashamed of showing her feelings, and yet surely not child enough to be taken in his arms and kissed and comforted.

"No, dear," he said, caressingly, with the tenderest look in his eyes. "I'm awfully grateful to you for caring ever so little; but I assure you I'm not worth it."

"Not worth it?" she repeated, with a little tremble in her voice, and then to his inexpressible dismay she stooped her auburn head, and gently touched his hand with her fresh warm lips.

He drew it away as if he had been stung, and then recovering himself quickly, as he saw the hot blood rush to her cheeks, he took her small sun-burnt hands in his, and slowly touched, first one and then the other, with his monstaches.

"That is more as it should be," he said, lightly, "for you are Miss Romer, of Castle Wildgrave, and I her most humble servant."

The next moment she ran out and jumped upon her pony, waved her hand to her brother, and trotted homewards in her own independent fashion.

Treherne borrowed Gordon's horse and followed quickly on her track. He saw her safely out of Broadbent, but he did not attempt to overtake her, for he knew instinctively that she would rather be alone.

As he was riding slowly back lost in thought, a man stepped from under the shade of a pine tree, and touching his hat, asked respectfully if that was the way to Mr. Verreker's.

"This is Colonel Gordon's place, Broadbent, and Mr. Verreker lives at the Rectory in Stanpoole. You had better get into the high road," pointing with his riding crop to the gate he had just passed through. "It's a longish walk—five or six miles—but you can't miss it, red gothic house covered with creepers."

"Thank you, sir. Nice property this," looking round as if he were in no hurry to proceed. "I'm interested in mines myself, and should like to see a silver-lead mine of all things. I suppose there would be no objection?"

"There's nothing to see. Come a year hence, and there may be something to show you," and with a careless nod Treherne rode on, irritated by the persistent stare of the man's bright eyes.

Suddenly it flashed across him that this was Jacob Smith, the detective, and he remembered Gordon's words, "when he takes to watching you, it will be U.P."

"I wish to goodness I had knocked the fellow down!" he reflected with regret, for prudence was not one of Ronald Treherne's most conspicuous virtues, and whenever he was in a difficulty he had a longing desire to fight it out.

"Of course it was all a plant about Verreker's. He must have known where he lived as well as I did. Confound his impudence!" with a frown. "I won't say a word to Gordon, it would worry him so."

He kept it to himself, but Wilfred Romer knew at a glance that something had occurred to annoy him, and watched him with his wistful eyes, like the Newfoundland whom he had found at the Tower.

"Father," cried Hilda, bursting into the library at the Castle in her usual impulsive fashion, "Mr. Treherne says you would think him an 'insufferable cad' if he called me Hilda. Isn't it nonsense?"

"I like Treherne all the better for not doing it; it shows that he is as far removed from a

as possible," said Lord Wildgrave, with a smile. "He is a good deal older than you are, so I suppose he may do it if you wish it; but it's just as well that he shouldn't. Remember, it will be your seventeenth birthday on the third!"

"Yes, but I'm not to come out till I'm eighteen; and if I'm not a woman I must be a child; and I mean to enjoy myself as a child till the very last moment; and if Mr. Treherne doesn't come here for my birthday I won't have a birthday at all!" she said emphatically.

"Then I'm afraid you'll have to do without," looking amused; "for Treherne won't come. He hates society."

"But he doesn't hate Will, or you, and he doesn't dislike me altogether," with a slight hesitation. "And if you tell him that he must come, I know he will; and papa," leaning over his shoulder as he sat at the writing-table, "if a man's grey-haired and old you may do anything you like with him, mayn't you? You may treat him quite differently to a stupid boy, or a stuck-up young man."

"Yes, with more respect!" as he dated the letter he had just begun.

"That's not what I mean. If a man's old you may be more friendly. You needn't stand on your p's and q's, need you?" very anxiously.

"Of course it makes a difference," slowly. "Ah! I know it," triumphantly. "I won't interrupt you any more," and she darted out of the room as quickly as she came in.

Wilfred Romer returned to the Castle the next day, and his last request, as he bade Treherne good-bye with tears in his eyes, was that he and the Colonel should accept the invitation which his mother had just sent.

How could Treherne refuse? He tried to, but it was a dead failure; and Hilda clapped her hands with delight when she heard that he was really coming. She told the housekeeper that Mr. Treherne must have the best room, the best flowers, the best of everything, because he had saved Wilfred's life; and on the day that he was expected, she robbed the hot-houses of their best exotics to place them in a vase on his toilette table.

Gordon and he were to arrive on the 2nd, which was a Tuesday, and stay till the end of the week. On the Wednesday there was to be a ball in Miss Romer's honour, and Hilda had already made up her mind to dance the first dance with Ronald Treherne.

Wilfred tried to depress her by telling her that he would never dream of asking her, but she declared that she would get over that difficulty very easily, though she did not think it necessary to explain how.

Colonel Gordon and Mr. Treherne only arrived just in time to dress for dinner; so they were ushered to their rooms without seeing anybody—though poor little Hilda had been on the watch for them all through the long afternoon.

It was long since Treherne had put on evening-dress, but he looked perfectly at home in it, and he also looked a perfect specimen of an English gentleman—with his well-shaped head and handsome features, and the air of hauteur which was habitual to him.

Lord Wildgrave was standing on the hearth-rug, talking to a lady who was seated on an ottoman, when Treherne came quietly into the room. The Viscount gave him the warmest welcome, and then introduced him to his cousin, Mrs. Gifford. She was a very pretty woman, with large sparkling eyes, which she fixed in utter amazement on the handsome face before her, with its bewildering crown of snow-white hair, and the youthful blue eyes, which she knew so well.

"How changed you are!" she faltered; "and what on earth has happened to you?" rising from her seat and looking at him in utter bewilderment.

"Time and trouble change all of us, but you, Mrs. Gifford," said Treherne, with outward composure, though perfectly conscious that his host was staring from one to the

other, and on thorns lest his real name should slip from her lips.

"You know Treherne out in Africa?" Lord Wildgrave asked, quickly.

Treherne? What was the meaning of it all? Why did they pretend that he was somebody else when it was *Ralph Trevanion*—the man who had broken her heart during that moonlight ride on the Kloof—and she knew him in one instant by his voice.

"Yes, I knew him out there," she said, sinking back in her chair, with a dazed look in her eyes, her woman's wit telling her that there was some mystery here which could not be explained till they were left alone together.

"Kitty Carew! by all the powers!" exclaimed Colonel Gordon, with such an expression of dismay, that Treherne in spite of his own anxiety, could scarcely repress a smile.

"Keep quiet, for Heaven's sake!" he muttered under his moustache, as the rest of the guests who were staying in the house, trooped into the room, and amongst them he saw to his consternation, not only Captain Gifford, whose best man he had been at that hurried wedding in Cape Town, but Sir Thomas and Lady Dacre!

The blood rushed to his face as he imagined the scene it would cause if Gifford came up to him, and claimed him as his old friend Ralph Trevanion. The Baronet would denounce him as a skulking criminal, and before Hilda's, Wilfred's, and Lord Wildgrave's eyes, he would be branded as an infamous impostor! He set his teeth and threw back his head, prepared to meet the worst with all the courage he could command.

Sir Thomas came up and shook hands with him. Lady Dacre, who was talking to her hostess, sent him a swift, fugitive smile, with a graceful bend of her golden head, and even as she smiled, saw that there was something wrong, and drew a quick, sharp, breath, as she wondered what it was; and then the two young Romers seized upon him, and took possession of him, and he had to seem quite at his ease as he answered their eager greetings.

"Quick, Gus, stoop down!" Kitty whispered to her husband behind her large red fan. "Do you see that man over there with the white hair? Do you recognize him?"

Captain Gifford looked across the room to where Treherne was standing with Hilda on one side, Wilfred on the other, and the gaunt Sir Thomas waiting to put in a word.

"No," he said, quietly, "I never saw the fellow in my life before. Why do you ask?"

"I met him in Cape Town, and he has just been introduced to me as Mr. Treherne," she said, with affected carelessness, and so the situation was saved by a woman's tact, but only for the moment, as no one could feel certain that the crash would not come at any time in the course of the evening.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THE DAY.

THERE was not much sleep for Ronald Treherne that first night at the Castle. Colonel Gordon came to his room and begged him to leave the very first thing the next morning, letting him make what excuses he could for his abrupt departure.

But this Treherne steadily refused to do. It went against him to run away at all, and he could not run away for ever without creating the suspicion which he would be trying to avoid.

Gifford was an unobservant man, who could easily be taken in; his quick-witted little wife would rather die than betray him when once he had explained matters to him.

Here—and Hilda would be terribly disgusted if he disappeared on her birthday—the Colonel shrugged his shoulders, called Treherne the biggest fool he had ever met, and went off to his own room in a rage.

The next day being the third of September a grand "shoot" had been arranged, but Ronald Treherne amazed Lord Wildgrave by saying that he could not join in it till the afternoon, having promised to devote himself to Wilfred in the morning.

"To Wilfred and me," put in Hilda, with a little nod, as if she did not at all mean to release him from his engagement.

"But, my dear child," remonstrated her father, "you would not wish to spoil Treherne's sport? It isn't like you to be selfish."

"I may be selfish on my own birthday; for I'm queen of the day, and Mr. Treherne won't mind. Wilfred says he never thinks of himself at all," and with a triumphant look at Ronald, she walked off.

(To be continued.)

## CINDERELLA'S MARRIAGE.

—O:—

### CHAPTER XXXVI.

#### TANTALUS.

AS soon as the manager's announcement had been made, Bertie hurried out of the theatre, and went round to the stage door, bent on finding out where Madame Villari lived, and if it was possible to see her.

His inquiries were fruitless. No one seemed to know anything of the private life of the prima donna, and when, at length, he contrived to see the manager, that functionary absolutely refused to give him any information whatever with regard to Madame Villari.

But though baffled and dispirited, Bertie had not the least intention of giving up his quest. He was quite determined to have an interview with this woman who had affected him so strangely, and he worked with such success that he finally discovered the street and house where the singer was living, and even heard some scanty amount of gossip concerning her.

He was told that she lived a very quiet and retired life with one elderly maid, a French *bonne*, and her little boy. Excepting a drive in the afternoon—always in a close carriage—she did not seem to leave the house until evening, when she was driven to the theatre.

Not a breath of scandal touched her fair fame; she would not even accept bouquets; and men had learnt that those gallantries which most actresses accept as a matter of course were utterly distasteful to this young Belgian—for such she was supposed to be.

As early the next morning as etiquette permitted Bertie left his hotel for the actress's house. At the corner of a street a carriage was stopping, while a servant fetched something out of a store. By the maid's side a tiny child toddled—a little golden-haired boy, whose beauty at once attracted Carbone's attention, and who returned his glance with a brave fearless smile that showed shyness to be unknown to him.

He paused and patted the child's rosy cheek, unconscious of a pair of dark, wild eyes that were gazing at him from out of the carriage window. Their owner sank back amongst her cushions with a little stifled cry, and drew a thick veil she was wearing well down over her face.

A moment later and Bertie had passed on, unconscious of the near proximity of his wife, unconscious that the child whose cheek he had touched was his own son!

Such are the strange chances of life! Arrived at Madame Villari's house, his knock at the door was answered by a dark, oldish woman, who briefly told him that Madame was out.

"When will she be back?" he inquired. "Ah! That I can't tell. Madame has left Melbourne, and it is impossible to say when she will be back. It may be a month—it may be two or three."

It is to be feared that as he heard this, Bertie



muttered a curse on his ill-luck. He was at a standstill now, for writing to her would do no good.

"Perhaps," he said, tentatively, to the woman, and holding a sovereign between his fingers as he spoke, "perhaps you can tell me where Madame Villari is gone?"

"No, sir, I cannot," responded the servant, quickly, "and," she added with considerable asperity, "if I could I wouldn't. It's against my mistress's orders."

And so saying, she slammed the door unceremoniously in his face, and he had, perforce, to beat a retreat.

The same day it was announced publicly that as Madame Villari's indisposition still continued, her medical man had advised her to have a change of scene, and she had therefore left Melbourne for a few weeks, during which time her place at the theatre would be filled by Mademoiselle Blank.

It is needless to tell our readers that Car-bonnell's vague, half-formed suspicion was a true one, and that Madame Villari and Lucinda were in effect one and the same.

Her history since she set out with Signor Crispi, as a member of his operatic troupe, may be told in few words, for it was one long story of success.

From the first moment, when clad in the white skirt and velvet bodice of Goethe's heroine she appeared on the stage as the hapless Marguerite, there had been no doubts as to her popularity.

Critics and public combined to praise her—her voice, her acting, her charming personality, all were commented upon, and all were admired.

Signor Crispi was a little afraid that, young as she was, she might lose her head under this cloud of adulation that was offered up before her, but she proved him wrong. She was absolutely unmoved by it.

In effect, she did not like the theatre, the glare of the footlights, the noise, the applause, the publicity, all these were distasteful to her, for her nature was essentially a domestic one, and only the sternest necessity would have induced her to seek her fortune in such a manner.

But her son—growing every day more bright and bonnie—sweetened the uncongenial toil. It was for him she worked; for him, not for that upturned sea of faces in front of her, that she sang and acted.

The money she earned now, and which she was putting by, would in the years to come help to educate him and make him independent of the world that had been cruel enough to his mother.

As time went on, it brought with it some consolation to our poor Lucinda. The memory of the past grew less insistent, even if its bitterness did not decrease.

She strove with all her might and main not to let her thoughts dwell on Bertie, and in order that she should have no chance of even seeing his name, she made a strict rule of reading no English newspapers. Hence it arrived that she knew nothing of Lady Christabel's projected marriage, nor of Little's denouncement and its tragic sequel.

On the night of Bertie's appearance at the theatre it was not until after the first act that Lucinda, glancing carelessly round the audience, from one of the side boxes caught sight of her husband's face and recognized him.

The shock of surprise was so great that it was with difficulty she kept herself from fainting. She at once announced to the stage manager that it would be impossible for her to go on acting that evening, and went straight home, uncertain as to whether she should not leave Melbourne that very night.

However, she finally decided to wait till the morning, and her plans were further determined by a letter she found awaiting her.

It will be remembered that the box to which Revel on his dying bed alluded as contain-

ing papers belonging to his wife, which he fancied might throw some light on the obscurity of Lucinda's parentage, had been given in charge of a man named Cyrus Brereton, who had emigrated to Australia shortly after Revel's death.

For this man Lucinda had caused a search to be instituted, and with such success that the letter now lying on her table told her that he was settled as a squatter in —land, and that in three days she could reach his station. He was, the letter stated, now in a very fair position, and was looked upon as a rising man in the colony.

Hither Lucinda determined to go. If her search proved nothing but a wild goose chase, well, she could still push farther on and see the country, and in any case, she would have to be out of Melbourne while Bertie was there, for she feared his keen eyes might pierce through her very flimsy disguise, and that in spite of her golden hair he might recognize her.

How near they were to meeting each other we have seen. The poor girl's heart beat with such frightful rapidity when she saw him touch the boy, that it seemed as if it must burst, and while it betrayed to her her weakness, it told her too that in spite of all that had passed, in spite of his doubts and his cruel words, Bertie was still the one love of her life—her here, her king!

He passed on; the danger was over, and she breathed again. After that, the boy and his nurse re-entered the carriage, and they were all driven away.

Fortunately for the success of her present undertaking Lucinda had no lack of money. Signor Crispi had proved himself very fair in his dealings with her, and during this last twelve months her earnings had been very considerable. Of course, there was every prospect that her popularity would increase, and that before very long she would be able to retire from the stage with sufficient fortune to support herself and her son.

Of her journey it is not necessary to give a description; it took her some days to reach Brereton station, and she passed through scenes and scenery that under any other conditions would have interested her a good deal. As it was, her thoughts were too much occupied with Bertie to leave her leisure for anything else. She almost forgot the ostensible object of her journey, in the flood of memories that crowded on her after her strange sight of him.

However, at last the squatter's house was reached. It was a long, low, roughly-built shanty, with a verandah running along the front, and a garden leading down to a lake, or lagoon, fringed with she-oaks and gum trees. Some attempt at ornamentation was visible in the front of the house, for the pillars of the verandah were wreathed with greenery, the crimson flowered kennedia, and various other blossoming creepers, while big pots of geranium stood about, lending an air of brightness and homeliness to the place that at once appealed to Lucinda by reminding her of England—dear England that she would never see again!

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### A REVELATION.

CYRUS BRERETON was a tall, brown-haired, brown-eyed man, with a heavy beard and moustache, and a certain rough kindliness of expression that was rather prepossessing.

He was dressed in a Crimean shirt, a pair of old doekskin trousers, and riding boots that came up to his knees, his costume being completed by a large sombrero hat, very much the worse for wear.

Naturally enough he looked greatly surprised when he saw Lucinda and her cavalade, but he welcomed them hospitably, bade them enter, brought them fruit and tea, and regretted the absence of his uncle. He was in reality "boss," or master of the station, and under

whose protection he had placed himself on coming out to the antipodes.

As soon as they were alone, Lucinda lost no time in explaining the object of her visit, and his surprise was very great when he learned her identity.

"So James Revel is dead!" he said, thoughtfully, when Lucinda had told her story. "Well, I'm sorry for him—though many and many's the time I've warned him what the end would be. He was a clever chap—but he was a bad lot! Yes, though he's dead, and it's sorry speaking ill of them as can't take their own part, I can't say that I've ever known much good of him."

He paused for a few minutes, then said, with an awkward laugh,—

"I daresay you wonder why, speaking and thinking of him, as I do, I ever came to associate with him, but poverty, madam, as you may have heard, makes one acquainted with strange bedfellows. So it was in my case. It's no good talking of the past, since it's all over and done with; but, I myself was going very quickly to the bad. I was only saved by meeting my mother's brother by accident down at the docks the very day before I set sail for Australia. I hadn't seen him for ten years, and while I had been going down, he had been going up. He told me he had a station out here, and no children, so if I liked to come out with him I could make sure of getting an honest living. I consented, although he insisted on my sailing with him—which I did. The few things I had in my rooms were not worth much, but amongst them was the box James Revel had given me to take care of, and there was no one to leave it with, with whom it would be safe, so I decided to bring it out with me; and I thought that it was just on the cards Revel himself might decide on turning over a new leaf, and coming out after it himself. If he didn't I could always open it, and send him the papers. However, he's taken a longer journey than to Australia, poor fellow!"

Brereton paused for a moment, and remained sunk in thought. Lucinda interrupted his reverie by saying,—

"Did you know his wife—my aunt Maria?"

"Yes," he said, rousing himself. "It was through her that I first knew Revel himself. I was engaged to be married to her once. But that is a good many years ago, and she was not called 'Maria' then. Her true name was Marietta Wilson. Hers was a strange history. She was adopted in her infancy by a rich lady, who brought her up, and educated her as a lady, but unfortunately died without making a will. All her money went to a distant relation, and Marietta was left penniless. However, by some means, she went out to India as companion to some young lady, and while there, she wrote to me breaking off her engagement, and I did not hear from her again until I met her in London some long while afterwards, when she was married to James Revel. Of the strange vicissitudes of her life while she was in India, and afterwards, I know nothing, except that they had aged and changed her very considerably. Her temper had always been bad, but it had grown perfectly fiendish; she was a miserable, gloomy woman, without hope, without any remnant of kindly feeling; and her beauty—which had once been great—was all gone. I should have been sorry for her if I had not been so disgusted with her, for to put the finishing touch to her degradation, she had taken to drink. Perhaps," he added more briskly, "the contents of the box may throw some light on her Indian career. I will go and fetch it."

He left the room, and Lucinda felt herself the prey to a very natural excitement during his absence. She went to the verandah, and stood there looking out. From the bottom of the garden she heard the shouts of laughter of her son, who was playing with his nurse, and the sounds were music to the young mother's heart.

She was standing thus when Brereton returned, and he paused for a moment on the

threshold to admire the graceful, lithe young figure, clothed in a white dress—the lovely statuette throat, round which curled little rings of golden hair.

Perhaps, if he had known the golden hair was nothing but a wig, the squatter's admiration might have been less.

"She can't be Marietta's daughter," he said to himself. "No, there isn't the faintest trace of resemblance. Revel was wrong in his suspicions."

And then he came forward, and put on the table a small, square iron box painted black, and having the letters "M. W." on the lid.

"There," he said, as Lucinda turned round from watching the boy. "I will leave you for awhile, madam, while you see what the box contains."

The box contained several articles. Three or four bundles of old letters, tied up with some peculiar kind of grass, an Indian silver necklace, quaintly cut into curious beads, and having one or two charms dependent from it, a diary of the year 185—, and some odds and ends of jewellery, including a locket, in which were two miniatures painted on ivory.

As Lucinda looked at the one she gave a great start, and for a few seconds could hardly believe that her eyes were not playing her some trick. *The likeness was the fac-simile of the one Miss Carboneil showed her a week or so before her death—that of the Earl of Thornleigh!*

She sat staring at it, then took it up, and examined it more closely. Yes, there could be no mistake, the picture was beyond doubt that of the present Earl's brother, and apparently painted about the same time as the one formerly in the possession of Miss Carboneil.

On the other side of the locket there was a second portrait, that of a child of about two years old, a small, delicately-faced baby, with big, dark grey eyes and a mass of close clustering brown curls. Beneath it was written the name "Elodie."

Somehow instinct told Lucinda that this was her own likeness, taken when she was little older than her boy was at the present moment.

More and more bewildered, she untied the packet of letters, and was about reading the first that came to her hand when a sudden revulsion of feeling overcame her, and she put down the yellow, time-worn epistle.

Was she justified in thus opening and reading the letters of the dead? How did she know that they contained anything relating to herself?

She debated this point for some moments, but finally decided that the circumstances justified her.

If the letters and diary threw no light on the obscure point of her parentage, then she would destroy them, and what they contained should never pass her lips.

It was a strange story that those old papers told—a story of passion and crime—of a love that turned to hate under the pressure of jealousy, and a hate that translated itself in its turn to dire revenge.

We need not trouble to go through all the letters and the diary as Lucinda did; it will be sufficient if we indicate the gist of the narrative they contained.

It seemed that while Marietta Wilson was acting as companion to the lady with whom she went out to India she became acquainted with Lord Thornleigh, who had not long arrived from England, and who was a friend of the lady's husband.

Thus it happened that the two saw a good deal of each other, and the result was that Marietta fell madly in love with the handsome young Earl.

So far as Lucinda could make out, the nobleman did not return, or even guess the passion he had inspired, but he seemed to have liked the girl very well as a friend, and paid her a good many attentions—such attentions

as an Englishman might almost naturally be expected to pay to a fellow countrywoman in a strange land.

She, however, flattered herself that he loved her, and that he was only waiting to declare himself, and under this impression she wrote to Cyrus Brereton, breaking off her engagement with him.

Then Lord Thornleigh seems to have left the town where he had been staying, and to have gone a good way up country to the court of one of the native princes, where he met with a girl called the Princess Elodie, who had been brought up at the court, although her parents were both English, and she herself was a British subject.

With this girl, who was transcendently beautiful, he fell deeply in love, and she became his wife. Unfortunately she could not speak English, and her husband was anxious that this omission should be remedied before he presented her to his friends in England, so he sent for Marietta Wilson, offering her very generous compensation if she would undertake his wife's education.

Of Marietta's rage and despair at this juncture her diary afforded sufficient proof, and it also recorded her solemn vow to avenge the injury which she fancied had been done her.

In order the better to carry out her evil designs, she consented to Lord Thornleigh's proposal, and joined him and his countess, with whom she stayed until after their daughter was born.

All this time she waited and watched for the opportunity that she felt must sooner or later come, when she could strike a fatal blow at the happiness of the Earl and his wife. Her first idea seemed to be to foster jealousy between them; but their love and trust in each other was so perfect that this proved impossible, so she had to devise some other scheme of satisfying her vengeance.

Strangely enough, her hatred of the man whom she looked upon as her recent lover was not half so intense as her hatred of his wife.

On Elodie she laid the blame of her unhappiness, arguing, in her vanity, that if the beautiful princess had not tried to gain his love the Earl would have been true to his former fancy.

Then a terrible thing happened. The Earl was assassinated, and his widow determined to go to England, in accordance with his last wishes, and present his child to his relations, for Lord Thornleigh had repeatedly expressed the wish that the little Elodie should be thoroughly English in all her tastes and habits.

It was at this juncture that Marietta saw her way to revenging herself. The poor Countess worshipped her child with an all-absorbing devotion that left her no other wish in life than to promote the little one's happiness. Marietta resolved to take the baby away as soon as the ship reached England, and thus leave the mother doubly desolate in a strange land.

She carried out this plan, and in order to hide herself the more securely from notice, she took lodgings in some obscure street in the East-end, when she became acquainted with James Revel.

Here the narrative came to an end; but Lucinda herself could supply the conclusion. She saw now why her supposed aunt had been so cruel to her, why she had done her best to steep the child in wickedness and degradation, until in order to escape from it all the poor child had been driven to the verge of suicide.

Yes, she saw it, but at first she could hardly bring herself to believe what was nevertheless so very clear.

She, the wait, the stray, picked up in the gutter, as it were, by Bertie Carboneil, was nevertheless the daughter of the late Earl of Thornleigh, the niece of the present one, and the cousin of Lady Christabel Kemmere!

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### AT LAST!

WHEN Cyrus Brereton returned to the long, low room that was the general living room of the family, he found Lucinda sitting as still as if she had been some image carved out of marble, with the box of letters in front of her.

Nevertheless, it was easy to see that she was deeply moved, for there was a curious sort of mist, nearly resembling tears, in her eyes, and two bright carmine spots burned in her cheeks. Her hands too, trembled, as, at the sight of her host, she replaced the letters in their former receptacle.

"Well!" he said, with a rough sympathy in his voice, "has your search been successful?"

"Yes," she returned, simply. "I know who I am now."

He looked at her curiously, but there was enough of the gentleman still remaining in him to prevent him from asking for further information, and with a good deal of tact he changed the subject.

"I was going to suggest that you should stay here for a week or so, if there is nowhere else that you want to push on to," he said. "My old uncle and aunt will be home to night, and they'll both be delighted to see anyone from the old country."

Lucinda accepted his invitation with grateful alacrity. She felt it would be a great relief to stay for awhile where she was in the peace and solitude of this outlying station, where she would be free to roam about with her boy, away from the gaze of that public whose favourite she was, but for whom she had never quite got over her distance.

She wanted also to think over the secrets which Marietta Wilson's carefully-preserved documents had told her. It was difficult to accustom herself to the idea that she was indeed the daughter of an Earl, the heiress of one of the oldest and noblest families in England's aristocracy—she who had always thought herself the child of poverty, if not of shame.

And so three days passed away, and she still lingered on at Langloil—as the Brereton station was called.

On the third afternoon, she and little Bertie, and his nurse were down by the side of the lake. The men were all away from the house, the women were at work somewhere in the back premises, but although the sound of their laughter came faintly at intervals, there was no one to be seen anywhere about.

A alumbrous noontide stillness lay over the station. The waters of the lake mirrored back the deep intense blue of the sky like a looking-glass, and on their placid surface the dark flat leaves of the lilies held up the white cups, odorous with languid perfume. Little Bertie cried out for the flowers, and Lucinda, who spoils him to his heart's content, unmoored a boat that was fastened to a chain, and got in with the intention of gathering some for him.

But no sooner had the boy seen his mother enter the boat than he wanted to follow, and screamed lustily by way of enforcing his request.

"Why not let him come in, madame?" said the French laundress, who was herself of opinion that there could be no pleasanter way of spending the afternoon than floating about on the lagoon.

"He will sit quite quietly on my lap—there will be no danger of his falling in."

Lucinda was not afraid of her skill in managing boats failing her, for when she and Miss Stuart were away for their holidays in the old Brussels days they had generally chosen some resort where boating was to be had, and she had proved herself a proficient in sculling.

This boat was large, roomy, and flat-bottomed—one that would require a great deal of exertion to overturn. Yes, she decided it would be safe enough, so the nurse



brought her charge in, and then Cinderella began to pull away towards the middle of the lake, where the water lilies grew.

A little farther down there was an island covered with trees, all wreathed with boys and crimson flowering creepers, and this served the purpose of concealing any other boat that might be advancing from the other end of the lake—the lake, it must be mentioned, formed the nearest way of approaching Langloil from the neighbouring station.

Lucinda was so much engrossed in pulling up the long-stemmed lilies, that she was oblivious of the sound of oars until a boat suddenly shot out from behind the island, and came straight for where her own rocked gently on the water.

Then she looked up in some surprise, and found it contained two men, one in the rough dress of the colonist, and the other a tall, distinguished looking Englishman, clad in a white waist suit, and wearing a white helmet with a plume twisted round it.

One glance and Lucinda sank back on her seat incapable of speech or motion—for she recognized her husband.

At the same moment the boat shot up along-side, and the little Bertie, who was in his nurse's arms, made a sudden leap forward, crying at the same time,—

"Da-da! Da-da!"

Lucinda sprang to her feet with a frantic cry, but she was too late. The child had fallen into the water, and instantly disappeared under the other boat.

In order to explain this recognition of Carboneil by his son, it must be mentioned that since she had been at Langloil, Lucinda had pleased herself by showing the boy a picture of Bertie that she had painted from a photograph.

It was an excellent likeness, and it so chanced that it had been taken when the young man was in India with his regiment, and was wearing a dress almost identical with his present one.

Lucinda would have thrown herself in the water after little Bertie, and thus, in her frenzy, have accomplished matters very considerably if she had not been held back by the nurse.

"That monsieur will save him, madam—the one in the white attire!" she whispered, eagerly. "See, he throws himself in—he dives, he swims—ah, he has the *cher petit*!"

And Marie, after this graphic account of little Bertie's adventure, and its happy termination, sank plumply on her knees, and said a prayer with more than French fervour, for the rescue of her darling.

Meanwhile, Bertie, finding himself nearer the shore than either of the boats, struck out for the bank, carrying the child with him.

Then a new fear overwhelmed Lucinda. Was her boy hurt—had his head struck the boat as he threw himself toward his father?

The thought was agony, and obliterated every other.

She took up the skulls, and pulled with frantic haste and energy towards the shore, then sprang out of the boat, and, forgetful even of her husband in her anxiety, snatched the boy from his arms, and covered the dear face with kisses.

"Oh, my darling! my darling! you are safe! you are given back to me from death!" she cried out hysterically, clasping him to her breast, to the deep disgust of little Bertie, who felt wet and uncomfortable, and also resented being taken out of the strong arms that had held him so comfortably, and that had for his young imagination all the charms of novelty.

He struggled vigorously to free himself from his mother's embrace, and repeated his former cry,—

"Da-da! Da-da!"

"Cinderella!" said Carboneil, in a deep, moved voice, "give me the boy, I will carry him to the house. He is wet, and his clothes must be changed at once. Indeed, it will be

best to let him have a hot bath, and so do away with all risk of his taking a chill."

She looked at him bewilderingly, but no idea of denying her identity came to her. If she had thought of it at all, she would have seen that she had betrayed herself beyond all hope of convincing Bertie that he was mistaken; but, in point of fact, it was her boy who engrossed her anxieties, and she was all eagerness that he should be got back indoors, and have the hot bath without a moment's delay.

She did not resist when Carboneil took the child from her.

Little Bertie was a big, strong boy for his age, and much more of a bundle than his mother could carry.

She followed the two a few paces behind, her hands locked in front of her, her eyes strained and anxious.

It was not until Bertie had been in his bath, and, after having fresh clothes on, had gone to sleep in his nurse's arms, that she fully realized her position, or the fact that she had in effect been a passive spectator during all this time, while her husband had given the necessary directions as to what should be done for the child.

It was brought home to her very forcibly and vividly by Bertie laying his hand on her arm.

"Come out with me, Lucinda; I must speak to you alone."

There was no resisting the quiet authority of his tone, and in silence she let him guide her out of doors, and down towards the lagoon, where they were well out of earshot of the people in the house.

Then he released her, and stood opposite to her, looking at her long and sadly.

It was a strange meeting for this husband and wife there under the luxuriant tropical foliage of the Australian sky, with its teeming wealth of leaf and blossom, its brilliant hues, its wonderful vegetation, a striking contrast to the scene and conditions under which they had parted in the grey gloom of the November fog on that miserable night so long ago!

"Why did you leave me?" he said at length. "Why did you not tell me the truth, and give me a chance of begging your forgiveness for the wrong I did you in doubting you?"

She was silent. Her lips trembled, but very emotion prevented the words from coming out.

The emotion had set in now. She had time to realize her actual position, and she grew chill with a nameless fear.

Had Bertie married Lady Christabel?

Suddenly Carboneil's tone altered. He came a step nearer, and took her hand, pressing it forcibly to his lips.

"Do I greet you thus with words that sound like reproaches—I, who should go down on my knees before you, and kiss the hem of your garment?" he cried passionately. "I am not surprised you left me as you did, for my sin against you was one not easily expiated. But, oh! Cinderella, it has surely been wiped out in the tears of blood I have shed since then!"

"Hush!" she exclaimed, bewilderedly; "I do not understand—I feel faint—giddy."

She put her hand to her brow, and seemed about to fall, when he sprang forward, and caught her in his arms. Then he seated her gently on a moss-covered log lying on the ground close to where they had been standing, and fell on one knee by her side.

Before he could speak she bent forward, her breath coming and going, her bosom heaving tumultuously.

"Tell me," she panted, in quick detached sentences—"one thing. Are you married?"

"Married!" he repeated, looking at her as if he thought she had taken leave of her senses.

"Yes, of course I am married—to you."

"But to no one else?"

"Why, dear Cinderella, what are you talking of? Can a man have two wives?"

"Yes," in a very low tone, "if he thinks the first be dead."

"Ah!" he said, a sudden light of compre-

hension breaking in upon him, "you thought I should marry again?"

The colour that flushed her fair face was sufficient answer to the question.

"You thought I should marry Christabel?" Again that flash of crimson in her cheeks, but she did not speak.

"Well," he said, very deliberately, "you thought wrong. I should never have married again—never, never!"

"But you loved her!" The words were very low—hardly spoken above a whisper. Still he heard them.

"Did I love her?" he said. "I don't know—I think not. I was fascinated by her beauty, and her brilliance, I was flattered by her preference. I made a fool of myself a hundred times over for her sake, but I don't think my passion was worthy of the name of love. She caused all that was ignoble in my nature—nothing good."

Lucinda breathed a long, deep sigh, and looked beyond him to the hazy blue line of the distant mountains. Her being was shaken to its very foundations, every nerve thrilled with excitement, every pulse beat with a strange throbbing sense of vitality that was almost pain in its intensity, and yet her brain seemed numb, paralyzed, unable to perform its natural functions.

If Bertie had not loved Christabel, then her sacrifice had been all in vain!

"Lucinda!" he exclaimed, presently; "when you left the Grange, did you know who really had murdered my aunt?"

She looked at him with wide open, terrified eyes, then covered her face with her hands.

"Don't ask me!" she sobbed; "don't ask me!"

"But I must; it is necessary that I should know. Not," he added, in a still lower tone, "that there is any doubt on the subject, only I wish to learn exactly what was in your mind when you left Rodwell. You knew that it was my cousin Christabel who had committed the crime."

Her hands dropped from her face; every vestige of colour left her cheeks.

"You know it too!" she breathed.

"Yes, all the world knows it now. You knew it then."

She bowed her head, seeing that further denial was useless.

"Yes," she said, "I knew it, because I picked up in the bedroom a knot of ribbon that she was wearing the night before, when I said 'Good night' to her on the landing."

"And yet you would not accuse her, even when you yourself were accused! One word would have been sufficient to clear yourself, but you would not speak it. If she had been your friend I could have understood it better; but she was not—she was your bitterest enemy."

"I knew it."

"And so you took this method of heaping coals of fire on her head."

"No! You credit me with a greater forbearance and charity than I possess. It was not for her sake I kept silence."

"For whose then?"

"She did not reply, and he repeated the question."

As he asked her the second time, he took her hands, and in spite of her struggles held them firmly in his.

"Was it for my sake, Cinderella?"

"Yes, it was for your sake, and for the sake of the kindness you had shown me," she answered at last, but in a cold, hard voice, very unlike her own. "Listen! and I will tell you everything, then you will see that I was simply paying a debt of gratitude I owed to you, and keeping at the same time anxious I made to Heaven."

"Do you remember that night when you took me to Brussels, and we stayed at Dover? Well, I made a vow then that if ever the time came when it was in my power to repay you for what you had done for me I would do it, no matter what the sacrifice might be to myself."



[LUCINDA HANK BACK, SPEECHLESS, FOR SHE RECOGNISED HER HUSBAND!]

"When Miss Carbonnell died, I thought the moment had come to redeem my vow. I did not believe she had been deliberately murdered. I thought Lady Christabel had intended taking the will, and that perhaps Miss Carbonnell had been roused to consciousness and had struggled. Anyhow, I did not look upon Lady Christabel so much as a deliberate criminal, as a criminal who had been hurried into the commission of a crime that she abhorred, and one of my reasons for this belief was the fact that after all she did not take the will.

"I knew you loved her—yes, Bertie," she continued sorrowfully, "you loved her then, and she loved you, and it seemed to me that if I could get away, and make the world believe me dead, it would set matters straight, and moreover, it would be for your happiness—so I went."

"Forgetting," said Bertie, lifting his hat from his brow, "that there is an eternal justice which, sooner or later, asserts itself, clearing the innocent and punishing the guilty. You were wrong, Lucinda, you erred in the very greatness of your heart, and the generosity of your nature, but Heaven has been good to you, and now all the world knows you were innocent.

"As for your love for me," his voice faltered, and he bent his head till his brow touched his hands. "Oh! my darling, what shall I say to you, how shall I make up to you in the future all the sorrow and shame of the past? Not all the devotion of a lifetime can redeem it! I stand helpless, ashamed before it!"

There was silence again—broken only by the chattering of the birds, the hum of the insects, the murmuring of the water against the sedgy bank. Then Bertie spoke once more.

"Sweetheart will love alone?"

Ah! Would it not atone? Did she not feel amply compensated for everything when

she felt his arms round her, his lips pressing hers, his heart beating against her own?

This was indeed love—not the careless affection, the friendly tolerance he had given her in the old days, but such passion as makes the blood course with renewed vitality through the veins—the love of which poets write and dream, and men long for, but rarely taste!

Yes, at last his heart was all her own—for time and for eternity—through all chances and changes, immutable as fate itself.

They had so much to tell each other of all that had befallen each since their separation, so much to say, that it seemed as if life would not be long enough for all their confidence. And then they had to hurry indoors when a lusty cry announced that Master Bertie was awake, and Carbonnell was formally introduced to his son.

#### CONCLUSION.

AND now their story is told, and there is little more to add. All this happened five years ago, and since then Lucinda has taken her place in society as Lady Elodie Carbonnell, and there dwells with her a gentle, fair-faced lady, who is called the Countess of Thornleigh, but who never goes out in the world, and is rarely seen beyond her own family circle. Her happiness chiefly consists in being with her grandchildren—two strong, sturdy boys, and one golden-haired baby who is also called Elodie.

Lucinda reminds her mother occasionally of the first time she saw her, gliding like a grey ghost, in the misty twilight of the music gallery, whither she had come through an entrance in the panelling from her haunts in the inner cave, where she kept her sad vigil by the side of her husband's coffin.

Of Christabel they never speak. She sinned and she suffered—who shall judge her?

As the days go by, Bertie's love for his wife grows even deeper and fuller, and her sweet eyes, when they seek his, are full of that "light which never sets on land or sea."

The past is expiated—its sorrows are gone like the snows of yester years—melted away by the golden glory of love's warm sunshine.

To the world our heroine is "Lady Elodie," to her husband she is always "CINDERELLA!"

[THE END.]

A CORRESPONDENT narrates an amusing episode in which the little King of Spain was the principal actor:—"I noticed some people looking up at the centre windows of the first floor of the palace facing the garden. In a balcony his Catholic Majesty Alphonso XIII., who had managed to shut the shutters behind him, was playing very contentedly, kissing his little hands to his much-amused subjects below. Then His Majesty's nurse, a dark, handsome, stout woman, in the costume of the peasants of the Santander mountains, appeared behind the King, and tried to coax him away from the balcony. But he sturdily clasped his little hands to the railings, and lustily cried, 'No quiero! No quiero!' (I won't! I won't!) But soon the nurse was reinforced by the Señora de Taconas, who acts as superintendent of the little Sovereign's household, and held the same post when his father, Alphonso XII., was still a child. At last the nurse lifted His Majesty up, and bore him off inside, despite his repeated and loud protests. As I had just come from the Casa del Labrador, where we had seen many portraits of the Bourbons, I could not help being much struck with the resemblance between the little fair, bareheaded King, three years of age, and his ancestor, Charles IV. He seems a very energetic child, and looks in fair health, though not stout or strongly built in body or limbs."





["MADAM!" CRIED DR. PARKER, ANGRILY, "I'LL THANK YOU TO RETRACT THAT SPEECH!"]

NOVELETTE.]

## MISS TABITHA'S MONEY.

—:—

### CHAPTER I.

MISS TABITHA was an old maid with a large fortune, and also—which her family esteemed less—an even larger heart.

She was one of the plainest women ever encountered, but her face was so cheerful and good-tempered her friends used to say it was a pleasure just to look at it, and these friends were not flatterers.

They did not make themselves agreeable to the old lady for the sake of her wealth, since, even had they been interested folks, Miss Tabitha had such hosts of relations, outsiders had no chance even of a legacy.

It must be confessed that her own kindred were far less attached to the old lady than the friends she had made for herself.

It had been a great bone of contention with the seven brothers that their grandfather chose to leave Tabby (as she was called in those days) all his savings.

When, on the principle of money bringing money, her godmother left her a fortune, the Messrs. Leigh were still more irate, though, as Tabby had spent ten years as the widow's humble companion, it can hardly be said she had not earned her good-will.

The seven brothers all thought it a great waste that one lone spinster should enjoy four thousand a year and a large, old-fashioned house at Clapham Common, so some of them offered to come and share the last lest she should be lonely, and others hinted that a judicious investment they knew of would largely increase her income; but Miss Tabitha refused all offers.

She preferred to be mistress of her own house, she said, civilly; and she had no desire to add to her wealth.

Rebuffed, but not discouraged, her relations paid assiduous court to her.

They abused her behind her back, but they spent a good many days each year at Clapham.

They never scrupled to apply to her in any family difficulty that ready-money could solve; and they occasionally, from time to time, put in a mild hint that it behoved a woman of such great wealth to make her will.

The eldest brother did not make this last suggestion. He said to his wife he should be quite content if Tabby forgot this duty.

He knew he was not a favourite, and should come in for little enough if she made a formal will; whereas, if she died intestate, the house at Clapham must come to him, and a seventh of the personality, which, as it was considerably more than he had ever managed to earn, would be in itself a godsend.

It was the month of August. Most of the Leighs were away from London, and the large house at Clapham had been wonderfully free of late from kinsmen's visit.

Miss Tabitha was walking in her garden leaning on the arm of Paul Armstrong, the son of an old friend of hers, who had lately settled at Clapham as a doctor, and been made free of the Shrubberies, for Miss Tabby had loved his mother dearly, and was disposed to make a great deal of the young surgeon, though she had not chosen him as her professional attendant.

A little old lady of seventy, with soft grey curls and a complexion as rosy as a girl's. Her mild eyes were full of kindness, and her voice had a cheery ring. She made her house a welcome resting-place to Paul in the leisure moments of his rather up-hill career, and the young man often told her he thought she was the happiest person he knew, in spite of her lonely life.

"Bless me, my dear!" the old lady rejoined, briskly, this August evening, "I need not be alone. Why, I've dozens of nieces and

nephews would be proud to come and take care of me; but I like to be my own mistress. You've never met any of my family, I think, Paul? Perhaps you don't know how good and attentive they are to their old aunt?"

There was a smile on her face which took away anything of bitterness there might have been in this speech.

"I don't want to know them," said Paul, decidedly. "My mother used to tell me she had no patience with your brothers; for, when your fortune came, instead of being glad of your prosperity, they all wanted to share it."

"So they did," Miss Tabitha laughed at the recollection; "but they were disappointed. I'm afraid there's another disappointment in store for them," she added, briskly, "when I die."

"You are not going to die yet," said Paul, cheerfully. "We can none of us spare you, Miss Leigh."

"We never know," returned the old lady; "I've passed my three score years and ten. I'm glad to have had this conversation with you, Paul. I want to ask you a favour."

A little bewildered, the young man declared he would do anything for her in his power.

"It is very simple," said Miss Tabitha. "Just tell me this, do you consider me in my right senses?"

Paul positively laughed at the question.

"Why, Miss Tabitha, of course I do. I will go further, and say I never met a woman with a clearer head for business."

She smiled as though he had paid her a compliment.

"I'm very glad to hear you say so. I asked Parker the other day (Dr. Parker was a contemporary of Miss Tabitha, and had attended her for twenty years), and he told me the same. You see, Paul, I am a little afraid sometimes they may try to upset my will, and I think I couldn't rest even in my grave if they succeeded."

"They couldn't," returned Dr. Armstrong,

confidently. "Why, Miss Tabitha, just think of the number of unprejudiced people who could prove your sanity."

"Well," said Miss Tabby, quietly, "you will promise me this, Paul, won't you, that you will do your best to see my wishes carried out? Whatever happens you will never help anyone to dispute my will, however much you disapprove its contents?"

"I will do my utmost," he answered promptly; "but, indeed, Miss Tabitha, you have no need to be uneasy, even if you have left everything away from your family, they can't dispute your right."

"No," said Miss Tabby, gravely, "they can't. I was my mother's only child, and my grandfather was nothing to them. My money came to me from people on whom they had no claim, and so they can't expect me to leave it to them."

Paul hesitated because he knew perfectly well they did expect it.

"Your mother was very intimate with our family," said Miss Leigh, slowly. "Did she ever tell you that I had a sister?"

"Yes."

He said no more. He had known the romance of Miss Tabitha's life long before he ever saw her. He had expected to find her a sour, misanthropical woman instead of the pleasant, cheerful creature she was.

He had often marvelled how well she had "got over it." The tone of her voice now made him think the cure was not so perfect as he had imagined.

"It is forty years ago now," said the old maid, "but I remember it as though it was yesterday. I was not rich then, had no chance of being so. I was a plain, homely woman of thirty, and I was engaged to a man I well-nigh worshipped. We had been engaged ten years, and some of them he had spent abroad trying to get on. He never made a fortune; but he did get a post worth two hundred a year, and he came home to England—to marry me."

"Don't go on," urged Paul, kindly. "I know everything, and it will only pain you to tell me the story."

She shook her head.

"I had rather tell you. I never was pretty, but he had left me a fresh, bright-spirited girl; as a woman of thirty, I suppose my plainness showed more; and then my sister had just come from school. He had seen her last a child of ten, now she was a beautiful girl. Well, my wedding day came, but there was no bridegroom. He had been married to Charlotte very early that morning, and had already sailed with her for their distant home."

"They deserved to be watched."

"We never heard much about them," said Miss Tabby, with a patient sigh. "Letters came seldom from Africa in those days, but three years later we did hear that Charlotte was dead, and had left a little girl. Dallas never wrote again; we never heard any more of him or his child."

"He would be an old man, now," said Miss Tabby, shaking her grey curls gently, "but there's the little girl. You're a young man, Paul, and maybe you'll laugh at an old woman's fancy, but it has always seemed to me that little Lotty belongs to me. I can't leave her any property, for it would but bring the child a weary load of trouble from all her uncles; but I want half of my things to be hers, and so I've left it all to one I can trust, and I know she'll find her out."

There was a mist before Paul's eyes as he listened to this story of "coals of fire." He did not remind Miss Tabby that "little Lotty" would be a middle-aged woman by this time. He could not find it in his heart, but he did suggest to her that it would be very difficult to trace her niece, and that she ought to leave implicit directions.

"Oh, I have thought of all that," said Miss Tabitha, contentedly. "Charlotte, daughter of Charlotte and Dallas Glennie (they're uncommon names you see, Paul), born at Port

Elizabeth some time between forty-five and forty-seven. I don't think there can be any difficulty, and I know my heir will fulfil my wishes and give her half. I'd have put it in the will only I feared they'd find out the poor child and make her promise them nearly all her fortune before she knew a word about it. Ah, Paul, it's hard lines for a woman to be rich."

The subject dropped, and they talked of other things, only when Paul began to say good-night the old lady put her little withered hand on his arm, and said gently,—"You'll not forget your promise, my dear. You'll see my will carried out."

Paul Armstrong lived about a mile from Miss Tabitha, but his house was a very different place from the Shrubberies, for this young man, although he had the right to put the house M.D. after his name, was very far from rich.

He had become a doctor from sheer love of the profession; but his means were so slender that his studies once completed, and his degree gained, there was nothing left to buy a practice or even a junior partnership.

He might, perhaps, have got an assistant's place in the country, but Paul was ambitious. He did not want to rusticate in a rural village, he wished to win name and fame for himself, and so he settled at Clapham, partly because he knew the neighbourhood well from having lodged in it for seven years, and partly because Dr. Parker, a leading practitioner there, was an old friend of his father's, and would be sure to give him his good word.

Practice dropped in sufficient to give Paul plenty of work, but many of the patients were gratis ones, and others showed themselves very backward in settling their accounts, so that though Dr. Armstrong never had to spend his days at home because he had no sick people to visit, the demands on his time did not bring in anything like a corresponding amount of money, and he had hard work to pay his way and keep up such appearances as his profession and the customs of Prettyman-road required.

Happily, he had an old servant who had lived with his mother, and made a shilling do rather more than its usual work. Happily, also, Prettyman-road was not exacting.

The house had been newly painted and papered when Paul went into it, and so that the steps were of immaculate purity, and the blinds clean and rolled up straightly, it mattered very little to the road's esteem that two or three of the upper-rooms were quite empty, that the butcher's cart only called twice a week, and Martha was the sole retainer, except a boy to deliver medicine.

There was a large brass plate on the door, and a wide entrance round the corner for the gratis patients, who flocked there twice a week from eight to ten.

The house stood at the corner of the street, and its rent might have been thirty or five-and-thirty pounds a year. A smaller one would have contained Paul and his factotum, but something must be sacrificed to "appearances," and so that and the young doctor paid about ten pounds a year of unnecessary rent and taxes.

He had very few friends in Clapham. A man does not make many, as a rule, in a London suburb. Dr. Parker asked him to dinner twice a year, three or four young men who had been fellow students, dropped in sometimes to smoke a pipe; but of feminine society—except at the Shrubberies—Paul was quite destitute.

He knew Mrs. Parker and her daughter well enough to call on them sometimes on a Sunday, but he was not a young man to get on easily with ladies.

His patients were mostly of a class a trifle below his own, and there was something in Paul's appearance and manners which kept second-rate people at a distance.

In sickness this vanished, and humble matrons felt perfectly at home with him, but their fears returned with health.

They admired him intensely, thought there was no one so clever as "our young doctor," but they never dreamed of asking him to "a out off the Sunday's joint," or to "smoke a pipe with Mr. B— when the children were in bed."

Paul Armstrong did not regret this. He was no misanthrope. He had no taste for a hermit's life, but he did not care in the least for humdrum society.

He would have visited a friend of kindred feelings and tastes gladly had that friend lived in one room, but he objected intensely to pretention and lack of refinement.

He was at this time nine-and-twenty, a tall, broad-shouldered young fellow, with dark curly hair, large thoughtful brown eyes, good features, a wide forehead strongly marked, and a rather cynical mouth.

Miss Parker—she was engaged to be married to a man she admired, so there could be nothing personal in the idea—always told her mother it would be the making of Dr. Armstrong to fall desperately in love, but if this was so at this time Paul remained unmoved.

It chanced that the young man was unusually busy after that August evening he spent in Miss Tabitha's garden. The dog days were fairly in, and though a very pleasant time of year in the country or by the sea-side, they are often apt to make work for a doctor in a densely populous London suburb.

Armstrong's practice lay chiefly among those who do not migrate for change of air in August, and he found his hands remarkably full, so much so that he had not time even to go over to the Shrubberies for an hour's chat.

It was just a week after that interview with Miss Tabitha that he returned home unusually tired. He felt jaded and out of spirits. He had had a hard day's work, and the hot pavements—he was far enough from a carriage—had made his feet ache. He was out of spirits and a little out of tune with the world in general.

"If there are no messages, I declare I'll go straight over to Miss Tabitha's," he decided, as he put his latch-key in the lock; "her garden will be a paradise on such an evening. Hey, Martha! what is it?" for the old servant had come hurrying up with rather an anxious face.

"Dr. Parker has been twice, sir, and he wants to see you to-night, if possible."

"Bother!" ejaculated Paul, who never stood on ceremony before his good old servant, "what on earth can he want? I suppose it's important if he sent twice!"

"He comes himself, sir," said Martha, much impressed; "he was walking the last time, and he said he'd come again if I could tell him for certain when you'd be in, which, of course, I couldn't!"

"What's up?" pondered Paul; "something special to make the old gentleman so imperative."

"He seemed in a great hurry, sir," rejoined Martha, "and please, sir, did you know Miss Leigh's gone?"

"Gone where?" asked Paul, simply; for Miss Tabitha was rather fond of little trips to the seaside, where she was usually attended by one of her affectionate nieces.

"I'm sure I don't know, sir," replied Martha. "Dr. Parker, he seemed in a rare way the second time, and he asked me, 'Doesn't your master know Miss Tabitha's gone?' and I said you hadn't mentioned anything about Miss Leigh to me."

A strange fear seized Paul. Perhaps it was her parting charge to him that summer evening which had put it into his head. Could Dr. Parker possibly mean that the kind old maid had gone, not to the seaside, but a longer journey—to that haven whence no traveller returns?

"I'm off to Dr. Parker's now, Martha!" he said, abruptly. "No, I've no time for tea. You can have some ready for me when I get back!"

Some men would have gone to the Shrub-



beries, and asked point blank after their old friend.

Paul Armstrong did nothing of the sort, though the old house lay only a stone's throw out of his way to Dr. Parker's mansion.

He had never met any member of Miss Tabitha's family, but he was well aware, from Dr. Parker and others, that they were a grasping, mercenary set.

It seemed to him almost desecration to think of them ruling even temporarily over the old lady's home. Besides, as they made a practice of disliking all Miss Tabitha's personal friends, no doubt they had labelled him in their own minds as "dangerous!"

No; he was better away. It might be a foolish fancy, born of his dejected frame of mind, when he received Martha's message. It might be that Dr. Parker would tell him of Miss Tabby as eating shrimps at Margate or gazing at the Brighton shops; but if anything had indeed happened to her, why then his visits at the Shrubberies were over, and he would rather not see the dear old place in other hands.

Dr. Parker had just finished dinner. Paul was shown into the library, and in a minute the old man joined him.

"A nice dance you have given me, Armstrong. I wrote to you days ago, and asked you to call."

"Then I never had your letter."

"That's Florence, then. I trusted her to post it. Bless me, Armstrong, when a girl has a lover she had better be married at once out of hand, for she's not a bit of use at home afterwards. Well, of course, I want to talk to you about poor Miss Tabitha. I thought you'd surely have been about that, even if you didn't get my note!"

The word "poor," told Paul Armstrong everything. He staggered as one struck by a sudden blow. He had loved the little old maid dearly. Her house was the nearest approach to home he had known since his mother's death. He was overworked and depressed. Faint from extreme heat and long fasting he turned as white as a woman.

"You don't mean she's dead?"

"She died on Sunday morning. Bless me, Paul, what's the matter?"

Then, being a practical man, and knowing a little of his friend's circumstances, he darted into the dining-room, seized on a glass, filled it with port wine, cut a thick slice of cake, and rushed off with his prize under the footman's very eyes.

"Drink that off first. Now eat the cake," he said to Paul, authoritatively. "Nonsense, I mean to be obeyed. You're half killing yourself, young man, and I don't mean to encourage you in it. I shall not say another word till you've done as I tell you."

Paul saw compliance was the shortest way out of the discussion. He finished the refreshment, and then leaned back in the easy chair with a strangely troubled look on his face.

"You may think it foolish, Dr. Parker," he said, simply, "but I feel unmanned. Miss Leigh was neither kith nor kin to me, but I loved her dearly."

"So did I," said Dr. Parker, a little gruffly, "and my wife too. Mrs. Parker was with her at the last, and wanted to send for you but I wouldn't let her!"

"Why not? Surely professional etiquette—"

"Professional etiquette be changed!" said the old man, irritably. "I like you, Paul, and I wanted to save you from the poor soul's relations. There'll be fear enough as it is, but it would have been ten times worse if they could have said you were with her at the last. They are a worse set than you can understand, young man. Why they'd be capable of saying you cooled her into making her will, when she was dying! No, at any rate, I have saved you that, and she died of syncope, and was quite unconscious at the last. You were best away."

"But what have I to do with her will?"

Dr. Parker stared.

"Don't you know?"

"Only this, that when I was there a week ago she made me promise solemnly, if there was any attempt made to upset her will I would do my utmost to see it carried out. She seemed in perfect health then. I tell you, doctor, I was perfectly amazed to hear of her death."

"She always had a weak heart," said Dr. Parker, gravely, "and it seems she saw something in the paper that worried her. I brought the paper away with me, and I'll give it you presently, but I can find no clue from it, nor can my wife. Let me see, what was I saying? Oh, do you really mean Miss Tabitha gave you no clue to the contents of her will?"

"I can hardly say that; but—"

"You need not think you are betraying her confidence by telling me. I and old Carleton are the executors, and she showed it to me before she signed it."

"Then I need not scruple. She told me she had left all her property away from her brother. She wanted half to go to Charlotte Glennie, her sister's only child. She was afraid to leave her money directly to her niece, since the other relations might worry her, so she bequeathed everything to a friend she felt she could trust, to make half over to Miss Glennie when she could be discovered. I remember it struck me at the time it was rather a blind confidence to repose in any man."

"I don't think he need be feared," said the doctor, quietly, "but there'll be a fearful work with the relations. I've had about a score down on me already with questions about the will. I've put them all off saying it's in Carleton's keeping, and he won't open it till after the funeral."

"When is that?"

"The day after to-morrow."

"I should like to go."

"You'll have to be there. My dear boy, haven't you guessed yet why I was so anxious to see you? You are Miss Tabitha's heir!"

"I—impossible!"

"It's true enough. I told her over and over again it would be better for you to know it. I even warned her—knowing something of your pride—you were as likely as not to restore it all to her brothers, but she said she would settle that."

"She has," and Paul recollected Miss Tabby's stratagem. "She made me promise solemnly to do my utmost to prevent her family from trying to upset her will, and I passed my word I would see it acted upon, if possible."

The physician smiled a little grimly.

"She was a cleverer woman than I thought for. She has chosen almost the only way of insisting on your taking the property. You can't refuse it after this, but the relations will be ready to tear your eyes out."

"I expect they will. Dr. Parker, I am not rich, but I think I would give anything I possess rather than this should have happened."

"Then you're an idiot," said the old gentleman, tartly. "There's not one of Miss Tabitha's family deserved a silver sixpence from her. The money came from two people who weren't in the least related to the Leighs. If anyone had a right to please herself in disposing of her fortune, that woman was my poor old friend."

"But they will say I courted her for her money."

"Let them. You know you didn't, and I tell you what, sir, you have Miss Glennie's interest to think of. You can't refuse your good fortune without risking her's. It's not a penny piece she'd get from her fine uncles and cousins."

"I can make it all over to her."

"You can't," Miss Tabitha had a mind to have her own way. She has left the Shrubberies and everything she dies possessed of, after the legacies are paid, to you; but the

house itself, the furniture, the plate, jewels, and such-like, besides a clear two thousand a-year are only yours for life. They are to descend at your death to your eldest son, and she expressly desires that you will call him 'Leigh.' You see, she has anticipated your desire to despoil yourself, and prevented it. In a word, if you found Miss Glennie to-morrow you could only give her fifty thousand pounds; and if you were a dishonourable fellow you need not give her a penny."

"And the other relations?"

"They are not even mentioned. Oh, there'll be an awful fuss! Reuben Leigh told me he expected the savings to amount to a fortune. Now, as a fact, there are no savings except enough to pay the legacies. She put that aside some years ago, and since that every January she has sent a cheque to some charity for the amount of her income remaining after her last twelve months' expenses were paid."

"I shall feel like a swindler."

"Noneuse."

"And how am I to find Miss Glennie?"

"Oh, she has seen to that—strange the hankering she has had all her life after that girl."

"You are as bad as poor Miss Tabitha," said Paul, half smiling, albeit he spoke sadly. "She would call her 'Little Lotty'; and now you speak of her as 'the girl,' whereas Miss Glennie must be in reality hard on forty."

"Well, well, Miss Tabitha and I are old fools. She worshipped Dallas Glennie, and I loved Charlotte Leigh well enough to pretty well break my heart over her loss, so I suppose we can't realize the child of those two is a woman grown."

"Have you any idea where Miss Glennie is?"

"Not the slightest. Her father was an arrant scoundrel. Persuaded that poor child he should commit suicide if she didn't listen to him. She was as good as engaged to me at the time. Bless me, Paul, a man doesn't forget these things. It was twelve years and more before I looked at a woman again, and well-nigh twenty before I married. My wife's a good creature, and I love her dearly. I'm fond and proud of Floy, but yet, after all this time, I can't help taking an interest in Lotty's child."

It was quite hopeless to make him remember Miss Glennie's age. It would have been cruel to tell him that his own wife (a sweet graceful woman, who looked far too young to be the mother of a marriageable daughter) was probably but a very few years her senior. The halo of the old romance would hang round "Lotty's child," and Dr. Parker would be her friend whatever happened.

The doctor was but little over sixty. He must have been a mere lad at the time of Dallas Glennie's marriage, yet the wrong had rankled all these years. He was rich and prosperous, his wife idolized him; their daughter was a girl any parents might have been proud of, and yet—he had not forgotten.

Possibly Miss Tabitha had known the old man's romance for they had been tried friends for years. Mrs. Parker gave her almost a daughter's love, and it was to her first outside her own house that Florence had carried the news of her engagement.

"She was a good woman," repeated the doctor, absently; "and she didn't forget Floy. She left the child two hundred pounds to choose a wedding present."

## CHAPTER II.

PROBABLY in the course of his life as a professional man, Paul Armstrong would have to face one or two trying moments, but never, if he lived to be a hundred, would he have to go through such an ordeal as awaited him after Miss Tabitha's funeral.

To begin with, he was a sensitive man, with

feelings as tender as a woman's. It jarred on him inexpressibly to see strangers in Miss Tabby's house, turning over her books, soulding her pet cat, and making themselves, as it were, at home there. Then he knew perfectly what was coming, and to see the eager expectant faces, and feel how different they would look presently was a trial.

The seven brothers were all there, five of them produced their wives; and Miss Tabitha was also followed to her grave by twenty-nine nieces and twelve nephews. Paul counted the total number of each, but he was quite unable to distribute them correctly among the seven mourning brothers.

Dr. Parker told him later that one of these seven was a bachelor, and another's wife was detained at home by the very recent arrival of another nephew for Miss Tabitha. The "dear departed," as her relations persisted in calling her, was divided in age by a great gap from the surviving Leighs.

Miss Tabitha, the only child of her father's first marriage was a dozen years older than the erring Lotty; and the sons came later still, so that the youngest of the seven was hardly forty-five, and doubtless besides the forty-one nieces and nephews present, there were a great many lesser descendants at home.

Fortunately, Mr. Carleton, the lawyer, was a man of cool common sense; he had been intimate enough with Miss Tabitha to know exactly the expectations of her relations, but he was as calm and as self-possessed as though he had had no idea of the impending storm, a man of decided temper and authoritative manners, just the sort of person to keep an excited crowd in order. Dr. Parker looked at his friend as he began to read the will and almost envied his *sang-froid*.

The document was very short and simple, the legacies came first, and were so few that the relations felt quite consoled to think how little inroad would be made on the bulk of the property; two hundred pounds to Florence Parker to buy a wedding present, a hundred apiece to three local charities, a small annuity to each of her servants, and a thousand pounds to Mr. Carleton to be spent by him in tracing the testator's dearly-loved niece, Charlotte Glennie, and discovering either her present abode, or the date of her death. Dr. Parker and the lawyer were sole executors, and as such received bequests of five hundred each. Mr. Carleton paused at this point, and the interest of his listeners grew intensified, but disappointment awaited them. Miss Tabitha named Paul Armstrong, son of her dearest friend, as her heir and residuary legatee, stipulating that the Shrubberies, the furniture, plate, and jewels, with a clear half of the personal property in the funds should be his only for life, and should descend to his eldest son; of the other moiety, amounting to about fifty thousand pounds, he was at liberty to dispose.

The storm of reproaches, taunts and abuse which broke on Paul's ear even surpassed his expectations.

"I shall upset the will!" said Reuben Leigh, the most worthless of the seven brothers.

"It's easy to see," said Mrs. John, a sister-in-law, with a red nose and short temper, "how the poor soul came to die so suddenly. It was just tempting Providence to go making her doctor her heir; she might have known what would come of it!"

"Madam," cried Dr. Parker angrily, "I'll thank you to retract that speech. I have been for years Miss Leigh's sole medical attendant. My professional income is well known to be counted by thousands. I am hardly likely, I should imagine, to commit murder to secure a legacy of five hundred pounds."

"I didn't mean you," confessed Mrs. John, promptly, "I meant young Armstrong."

"Dr. Armstrong," said the lawyer, with a stress on the professional title, "never had any medical acquaintance with Miss Leigh; their intercourse was of a purely friendly nature."

There is no need to dwell on the scene that followed.

Paul would gladly have gone home, and left the relations masters of the field, but Mr. Carleton insisted on his staying till the last of Miss Tabitha's kindred had left the premises. Then there was a hurried consultation between the executors and the happy (?) legatee.

"Of course, you'll come and live here!" said Mr. Carleton, decidedly. "It's the best house in the world for a doctor. Have your plate put up, send round circulars announcing your removal to your patients, and move in bag and baggage."

Paul stared. "Live here! I should be lost."

"It's no larger for you than it was for poor Miss Tabitha; it's the best plan really. Those people who have just left may give an infinity of trouble, coming pestering the servants; if you take possession at once, you'll put a stop to that."

"But it seems like seizing on the things as soon as the breath is out of her body."

"It was her wish," said Dr. Parker, quietly; "she asked me before she made her will if it would annoy me to have another doctor so near to me, and I told her the truth: I shouldn't mind if another doctor set up next door to me. I'm getting an old man; I don't want more money than I have; my old patients are not likely to desert me, and I don't care if I never have a new one. You just hear reason, Paul, and move here. You'd better start your brougham at the same time, and if I know anything of human nature, your practice will be doubled in three months."

Miss Tabitha's servants—an old man who acted as gardener and general factotum, and two neat maids—expressed their willingness to accept Dr. Armstrong for a master, and there was no doubt Martha would be in her glory as housekeeper. Mr. Carleton declared that in a week's time the new heir might be established at the old house.

"We have forgotten one thing," said Paul, gravely, to the lawyer: "the search for Miss Glennie."

"I shall put it into the hands of the right sort of person to-morrow."

"And," he hesitated, "life is uncertain, Mr. Carleton, and if I died Miss Tabitha's wishes might be neglected. I should be much obliged if you would make my will; never mind how short it is; just that I leave all I have to Charlotte Glennie."

"All you can leave," said Mr. Carleton, jestingly. "Half your property is reserved for your son, recollect."

"I shall never marry, Mr. Carleton. Don't let there be any delay, please; I shall not feel easy until Miss Glennie's rights are secured."

"A strange young man, Parker," said the executor to the old doctor after dinner, for the Parkers were hospitable people, and Mr. Carleton had been invited to return with his old friend.

"As good a lad as ever breathed," agreed the host, "but as proud as Lucifer. He'd have given back every penny to the family if Miss Tabitha had not tied his hands."

"He'd better marry," said Carleton, shrewdly; "with a wife and family to think of, he would lose his romantic notions."

"My Floy says it would be the making of him to fall in love."

"What a pity she has not a sister!"

Paul went home to Prettyman-road, feeling more affection than he thought he had possessed for the meagre house.

Martha met him at the threshold.

"There's no messages, sir," she announced, triumphantly; "and your tea's all ready."

But he was not to enjoy it. Perhaps as a revenge for his having deserted them all the afternoon, his patients determined to be heard. He had only just poured out his first cup, when there came a loud ring at the surgery.

"Drat that bell!" said Martha, really put out. "They might let you have a little peace, sir."

She flounced off to answer the bell. She

was so long before she returned that Paul began to expect it was some of his poorer patients, and Martha was trying to persuade them to wait till the morning.

She was an invaluable servant, and, in the main, a kind-hearted woman, but Paul had never managed to teach her that the lives of poor people were as valuable as those of their betters. It was a point on which Martha held her own opinion.

"The doctor is in," Paul heard her say as he reached the door, "but he is very much engaged. Unless it's urgent, I don't think he can come to-night."

"Here, Martha," interposed the master, cheerfully, "you can go downstairs. I'll attend to this."

Martha retired in high dudgeon; and Paul found himself face to face with a girl whom he had never seen before. She was plainly, almost shabbily, dressed, and the heavy rain had soaked her thin black mantle through and through. She had no umbrella, and the water poured off her hat. Paul's quick eye took in all this before he even looked at her face.

"Come in," he said, kindly, convinced she had not come out in such weather without real cause. "Come in and tell me what I can do for you."

He led the way into the surgery and lighted the gas, for though it was daylight still out of doors, the dark clouds made it already gloomy within. He placed a chair for her, but she never took it. She only turned her soft dark eyes on him with piteous entreaty.

"Oh, sir, come with me, or you will be too late."

He took up his hat and coat and was ready. The rain and wind ceased opportunely as they started, so that it was possible to speak without his voice being drowned.

"Where do you live? who is it that is ill?"

"Warden road," answered the girl quietly;

"and it is my sister."

"What ails her?"

"I don't know."

"You must have some idea," returned Paul.

"Is it a sudden attack? has she been ailing long? what are the symptoms?"

"She has not been strong for a long time. She used to see Mr. Marks; he gave her a tonic, but to-night when I came home I found her on the floor in a white heap, and she won't move or speak to me; it seems as though she were dead."

Paul knew Mr. Marks by name, a sharp-spoken, rather pushing young surgeon, who had lately set up at the corner of the Warden-road. He had heard it whispered that Marks was not fully qualified, and he had gleaned, chiefly from his own gratis patients, that the man was simply detected by the poor, though he seemed a great favourite with the small tradespeople of the district.

"Why didn't you go to Mr. Marks?" he asked his companion, not unkindly, but naturally. "If he has seen your sister before, he would understand her case better than a stranger."

"He would not come."

"Did you ask him?"

"It would have been no use—he never sees anyone unless he's paid first; it's eighteenpence if you go to him, or half-a-crown if he comes to you—and I had not got it," and the last words came after a painful pause.

Dr. Armstrong hated himself for having unwittingly forced her to make such a confession. He longed to say something of apology, but while he hesitated to think how to word it she misunderstood his silence.

"Indeed you shall be paid, sir," said Helen Fortescue, eagerly. "I shall have some money on Saturday, and I will be sure to pay you."

"For pity sake don't talk like that," said Paul, speaking almost gruffly, because he was so touched. "A man must be inhuman to refuse to do his best for any who needs his help. You mustn't judge all doctors by such a pitiful specimen as Marks. Some of us have a little feeling. Is this the house?" as she stopped. "I suppose you are in lodgings?"



"Yes." She blushed crimson. "My name is Fortescue, Dr. Armstrong, and I am a copyist clerk in a law stationer's office in London."

She opened the door with a latch-key. A woman, probably the landlady, came into the narrow passage at the sound. She seemed a respectable sort of body, poverty-stricken (Warden-road was many degrees lower in the social scale than Prettymann-road), but neat and clean.

"She's just the same, Miss Fortescue," said Mrs. Gibbs, civilly. "I've been a watching her ever since you went, but she's never stirred."

It was the top front-room of the little house where Helen preceded Paul Armstrong. Something very white and still was lying on the bed, and Paul knew as he looked at it that he had not been brought out on this inolement night on any false pretences. This patient needed him as badly as any could.

There was something touching about the room, everything in it spoke of poverty—not the flaunting, complaining neglect which some use to impress their troubles on other people, but the patient endeavour to make the best of a very little, the neatness and humble contrivances which try so hard to keep something homelike about a dwelling, however humble.

Helen Fortescue bent over her sister with a dumb terror in her beautiful brown eyes; she looked about eighteen; her dress was worn and mended, her face thin and pinched, but it had a strange sweetness about it. Dorothy had probably been the prettier of the two, she was fairer and her eyes were blue. Paul Armstrong could understand, under happier circumstances, she might have been lovely; now she looked just like a little faded flower broken by the wind.

There were no restoratives in the house, but, fortunately, he chanced to have some powerful smelling salts in his pocket. By the help of these he soon brought Dorothy Fortescue back from the borderland of unconsciousness.

"That's better," he said, when she had opened her eyes and even spoken feebly.

"Now, Miss Fortescue, perhaps you'll tell me why you fainted. Do you know you've given your sister a terrible fright?"

"I couldn't help it," said the girl with a shudder. "Nell, don't be frightened, but I've seen him."

If ever terror and dismay were painted on human face they were on Nell's then; she put one hand to her head as though to still its aching; her voice had a ring of bitter anguish as she asked:

"Are you quite sure, Dolly?"

"Could I mistake?"

"Now, young ladies," said Paul, interposing with assumed cheerfulness, "remember you are under my authority; you have placed your sister under my care, Miss Fortescue, and I insist on her being kept quiet. You had better get her to bed as soon as you can, and I will send something to make her sleep. Now, remember, there is to be no talking at all."

Helen followed him from the room; the friendly Mrs. Gibbs came back to sit with Dolly. Paul never attempted to remonstrate when he saw Helen meant to go out again; he guessed perfectly the Fortescues had but one room, and that she wanted to speak to him out of Dorothy's hearing.

"Well?" he said, as though it had just occurred to him, "it has left off raining, and if you could step round with me to my surgery, I dare say you would get the medicine sooner, as my boy will be gone home."

She said nothing, only followed him with that strange look of terror still on her face; but when they had reached the surgery, Paul put a chair for her, and instead of beginning to compound the medicine, sat down opposite her and asked,—

"Have you no parents, Miss Fortescue?"

"No."

"Forgive the seeming curiosity—have you and your sister really no relations?"

Nell raised her head and looked into his face. Something she saw there seemed to

inspire her confidence, for she cried impulsively,—

"I should like to tell you. You might advise me, only it is a long story, and perhaps you are busy."

"I am quite at your service," said Paul, kindly, "and I will do my best to help you. First, I ought to tell you your sister is very ill. She needs perfect quiet, the greatest care, and plenty of nourishing food."

"She is dying of terror and starvation," said Nell, bitterly. "Do you think I do not know it, Dr. Armstrong. Well, there are times when I am almost glad to know it; at least she will be safe from him, then."

"Miss Fortescue, she is not dying. It is at present not beyond the power of cure. Your troubles seem heavy enough, but don't go out of your way to think them worse."

Nell looked at him gratefully.

"If I could only give her rest and peace," she said, wistfully, "but I am so handicapped; let me tell you all."

Paul thought he had never heard a sadder story, nor one told more unselfishly; by Nell's version, she and Dorothy were alike in misfortune and suffering, but Paul, reading between the lines, guessed that Dorothy had been a petted, spoiled beauty, and that not only had she wrecked her own life, but had dragged her sister down with her into trouble and distress.

Their father was a clergyman, and at his death they had been received into an orphan asylum, whence at seventeen and eighteen they had gone out into the world as governesses.

"I should have taken you for eighteen now," said Paul, interrupting her.

"And I am one-and-twenty."

It was a pitiful story. The younger sister had attracted the notice of her employer's son, and been dismissed. Another situation was provided for her, with the same result; then she determined to get her living on the stage, and became a music-hall singer. For a little time she succeeded.

"I never saw her then," said Nell, sadly. "My employers were very kind, but they had a horror of music-halls, and—indeed the people Dolly had to meet with were not fit associates for my pupils. She was so good and generous she would not come to me lest she should draw me into trouble. For a whole year I never saw her."

Which Paul interpreted to mean that Dolly, being tolerably prosperous, had not worried her sister for twelve months.

"And then you met—"

"She came to me; it is just nine months ago. She said she was married and getting on, but her husband was much away, and she felt lonely, would not I give up my situation and live with her."

"It was a sacrifice—surely you refused?"

"I refused. I felt her husband would not like it. I had never seen him. A month later he wrote to me; his child was dead and his wife dying, I must come at once!"

"And your employer?"

Nell's eyes flashed.

"I had been with her over two years and had never had a holiday. I told her Dolly was ill, perhaps dying, and implored her to let me have a week's leave of absence."

"Did she refuse?"

"She did more. She told me Dolly and her husband were no fit company for her governess. If I went to their house I should never return to Spruce Gardens. She made me desperate. I packed my clothes, and left that very day, suffering her to keep my quarter's salary in lieu of notice. Dr. Armstrong, when I think of that woman I feel desperate."

"Don't think of her," said Paul, gently.

"Believe me, Miss Fortescue, deeds like hers don't go unpunished."

"I went to my sister, and I took an unutterable dislike to her husband. He had been a 'comic' at the hall where Dolly sang, but he had been 'out' for some time. I did

not like his ways to her. I felt afraid of him, and I could see her tremble when he spoke to her. She was very ill, and at last one day the doctor told me she might recover, but she would never sing another note."

"It all came out then. He had married her for her voice. There was a fearful scene. He was off the next morning at daybreak, and we discovered he had sold everything the house contained to a broker, who came that very afternoon to remove them."

"We came to Warden-road. I should have tried to have got an engagement as daily governess, but I had no references. I wrote a clear round hand, and a law stationer was glad to employ me."

"At first we got on tolerably, but Dolly has never recovered from the shock of her child's death and her long illness."

"She seems possessed with a terror of her husband's appearing and claiming her; night and day it haunts her. It seems cruel to leave her alone, and yet I must earn our living."

"And you called in Marks?"

"I took her to him once or twice, but he did her no good, and she seemed afraid of him."

"Do you suppose that she really saw her husband?"

"I can't tell."

"Such a man as you describe would not be likely to wish to burden himself with an invalid wife."

"No; but he may not know our poverty. He may try to find us out to work on our fears."

"I don't understand."

Nell blushed.

"He is a bad man. He might seem to want Dolly just to frighten us," blushing. "I would bribe him to leave her in peace."

"You must do no such thing."

"I could not," said Nell, simply; "I can just manage to pay our way."

A deep pity filled Paul's heart for the brave, hard-working girl, but he hardly knew what to advise her. He was aware that by the law the ex-comic singer could claim his wife, but he did not think him likely to do so. He could only tell Helen his own conviction, give her the remedies he had prescribed for her sister, and promise to look in at Warden-road the following evening.

The girl hesitated as he made this promise, and she seemed about to say something she found it difficult to utter.

Paul understood, and rejoined, promptly:

"It happens I have a patient close to you who needs a good deal of attention; I can look in on your sister without the smallest inconvenience. You must not think of me as looking out for two-and-sixpence like Dr. Marks every time I knock at the door, Miss Fortescue."

Nell looked at him gratefully.

"But your being kind enough to trust me is no reason why I should impose on you, Dr. Armstrong."

Paul laughed.

"I'll promise faithfully to send in my bill some day; meanwhile, Miss Fortescue, you must allow me to have my own way and visit your sister as often as I think necessary. By the way, does your landlady know she is married?"

"No," Helen blushed hotly; "I don't like deceit, but it seemed safer."

Paul looked thoughtful.

"Well; if Mr.—you haven't told me his name, by the way—troubles you, you had better send round for me. If I give him a piece of my mind, he may leave you alone for the future."

Helen went away, leaving Paul to wonder why the little surgery looked so dark and mean. He went back to his interrupted meal and indulged in day dreams of his new life at the Shrubberies, but somehow a girl's face rose up before him now and again; he could not get Nell Fortescue and her strange history out of his mind.

He made a few inquiries the next day, and found that the two girls had lived for six

months in Warden-road; they paid their way, but it was evidently a struggle; and all the time they had been in their humble lodging, not a single visitor had ever inquired for them; and not a single letter had ever come for either of them.

"And," continued Paul's informant, who was own sister to Mrs. Gibbs, and so likely to be correct, "they do say it would be a blessing, if the younger one were taken; she's but a poor sickly thing, and leads her poor sister a pretty life with her grumblings."

A very few calls in Warden-road brought Paul pretty much to this same view.

Dorothy was not a favorite with him. She seemed discontented and jealous at everything Helen did.

She had undoubtedly been very pretty, but she struck the doctor as one of the most unamiable young women he had ever met, and he wondered what Nell could find to love in her.

"I'll tell you what it is, Miss Fortescue," he said to Helen when he had attended the invalid a week, "you make a great mistake by humoring Mrs. Dart in everything. You ought to rouse her, and make her see how selfish she is."

But Nell shook her head. "She has had so much trouble, doctor." "Well, it seems to me the trouble was of her own brewing. She has wrecked your life for you, and the least she can do is to be moderately grateful in return."

Nell blushed crimson at the reproach. "Dolly did not know I cared so much," was the quiet reply; "and I'm glad I found it out in time before it was too late"—a remark which set Paul wondering—and taking care to make his next visit when he knew Dorothy would be alone, he asked her point-blank if her sister had no friends.

"She lived for more than two years in one family," he said, cautiously; "did no one she met there take sufficient interest in her to keep up the acquaintance?"

"Mrs. Leigh turned her away because she came to nurse me," replied Dorothy; "and I'm sure it was no loss. The Leighs were terribly poor, and Nell was worked to death. Mrs. Leigh was fond of her in a sort of way, and said she would raise her salary when they came into their fortune; but I don't think she meant it."

A strange suspicion came to Paul. "Was Mr. Leigh's Christian name Reuben?"

"Yes. Do you know him?" "I have met him. Well, Mrs. Dart, do you mean to tell me the Leighs cast your sister off without a simple word of kindness?"

"Yes. I think they treated her shamefully; and they kept her salary, too. Of course, I know you think it was all my fault, Dr. Armstrong, but it wasn't. They were longing for an excuse to get rid of Nell, because of Mr. Wilmore."

Light broke on Paul. "What had he to do with it?"

"He was a cousin of Mrs. Leigh's, and he was engaged to Nell; at least, I suppose they thought it was an engagement, but I don't suppose anything would have come of it. The Leighs would have taken care of that."

"Do you mean the engagement is broken off?" asked Paul, sharply.

"Of course it is. Mrs. Leigh told him a long rigmarole, and he came to our house to see Nell. I was in bed, but my husband saw him, and told me he was a stuck-up, self-satisfied idiot, and Nell was well rid of him."

"Do you mean you sent him away without your sister's knowledge?"

"Oh dear no," said Dorothy, complacently. "Nell had been alone with him for an hour. He gave her her choice between giving him up and dropping all intercourse with us. Of course, she wasn't going to forsake her own relations, so he went off in a huff. He is engaged to Mrs. Leigh's eldest girl now."

"How do you know?"

"Because we met them once on the Com-

mon. The Leighs have some relations living there. Well, Mr. Wilmore stopped of his own accord, and introduced Alice as his future wife. Did you ever hear of anything so inconsiderate?"

"And your sister?" "Oh, Nell got very white; but when they had passed on she told me she was very glad I had saved her in time, for it would have broken her heart if she had married him, and found out his true nature afterwards. I don't think Nell will ever marry now, she has grown so plain, and seems just cut out for an old maid."

### CHAPTER III.

WITHIN a month of Miss Tabitha's death Dr. Armstrong and Martha removed to the Shrubberies, and Paul began to perform his professional visits, driving in a very comfortable brougham.

It was just as the lawyer had predicted, success came promptly.

The first week of the brougham he had six new patients.

People evidently thought Dr. Armstrong of the Shrubberies quite deserving their confidence, and he was so busy the first few days after his removal that Martha remarked grimly she didn't see the use of his coming into a fortune if it made him work harder than ever.

He told Miss Fortescue of his change of residence, very simply. If she needed him at any time she must send to the Shrubberies instead of to Prettyman-road.

Nell smiled at the news. "That large house on Clapham Common? Oh, Dr. Armstrong, I am so glad, you must be getting on!"

Paul smiled. "I fancy I should have waited long enough for such a house had it depended on my earning it; but it comes to me from a very dear old friend who specially desired I should live in it."

"Your wife will like it," said Dorothy, calmly, considering she had been left out of the conversation quite long enough, "and the garden will be so nice for the children."

Paul laughed outright. "You are too generous, Mrs. Dart. I have none of the blessings you would laden me with. Didn't you know I am that much-to-be-pitied individual—a bachelor?"

"No," returned Dolly, promptly. "Nell told me you were married."

Miss Fortescue looked uncomfortable. "I never remember saying so, Dolly."

"Well," said Paul, feeling the conversation had taken an unpleasant drift, "there is no mistress of the Shrubberies, and a single man cannot possibly get through the quantity of fruit and vegetables the gardens provide, so you must let me keep you supplied with green stuff, Miss Fortescue."

A surprise was in store for the doctor. He had no sooner fairly settled at the Shrubberies than he received visits from all Miss Tabitha's seven brothers, and the strangest part of the business was that they all ignored the very unpleasant things they had said about him, and pressed him most warmly to visit them.

"I can't understand it," Paul remarked to Dr. Parker, with whom he was dining the following Sunday. "I must be a good ten years younger than the most juvenile of them. Surely they don't expect to outlive me and come in for all I can leave, as an act of restitution?"

Mrs. Parker smiled. "Ah, Dr. Armstrong, the problem is very simple, and if only you were a conceited man it would not puzzle you."

"But it does puzzle me," confessed Paul. "I have a strong idea there is some object in this sudden amiability, and I want to discover what it is."

Dr. Parker chuckled.

"Ah, Armstrong, you're too simple for

this wicked world. Some of the Messrs. Leigh have grown-up daughters, others have sisters-in-law dependent on them. There's not one of the seven, my boy, but has some young lady they would like to recommend you as queen consort of the Shrubberies."

Paul stared. "Do you mean it?"

"Of course, it's as plain as a pikestaff. You're the most eligible bachelor of their acquaintance. At the worst you've two thousand a year you can't make duets and drakes of. Why, Paul, do you know Mrs. Reuben actually called on my wife the other day, and said her second daughter, Sybil, was quite a genius for learning and intelligence, just the girl to marry a professional man!"

"I like Alice best," interposed Mrs. Parker, "but I hear she is engaged to that detestable young Wilmore."

Paul looked up quickly. "I have heard a little about Mr. Wilmore lately. I wish you would tell me what you know of him."

"He's not a bad fellow," said the doctor, "only he is so contemptibly weak. His father was a shopkeeper, and he's so afraid of people finding it out he gives himself the airs of a duke. Mrs. Reuben Leigh is a kind of cousin of his, and the most presentable connection he has, so I suppose in return for having been coached up in social etiquette, he is to marry her daughter."

"He was engaged to someone else," said Florence. "I hope she had the spirit to throw him over. Mr. Wilmore is just the kind of man to be a tyrant, unless his wife took the reins and ruled him completely."

"Which Alice Leigh's mother will insist on her doing," concluded Mrs. Parker. "Don't talk of these people, Floy, it makes me cross, only Dr. Armstrong, if you fall into any of the traps laid for you, don't say you've not been warned."

It was getting towards winter when Dr. Armstrong received a note begging him to call on Mr. Carleton at his earliest convenience, and Paul was honestly delighted when he heard that the search for Miss Tabitha's widowed niece had been ended by Miss Charlotte Glennie herself calling at the office.

"You couldn't have given me better news," said Paul, heartily. "Mr. Carleton, how soon can the money be transferred?"

The old lawyer stared at him. "If you take my advice you'll put it off as long as possible," he said, quietly.

Paul frowned. "I only regard it as a trust," he returned, gravely; "if I betrayed Miss Tabitha's confidence, I don't think I should have a moment's peace."

"Look here!" said Mr. Carleton, frankly. "Do you take me for a swindler? Do you know I was one of Miss Leigh's most intimate friends, and so can't you listen to me without jumping to conclusions?"

"I thought—" "That I wanted to make you keep the money," interrupted Carleton. "I dare say. Well, just listen! I want you to put off paying Charlotte Glennie fifty thousand pounds as long as you can, because I don't believe she is the woman she claims to be at all."

Paul stared. "But what object would she have in pretending to be Miss Glennie?" "Our man's been making inquiries, and I suppose it leaked out that there was money in question. Now, what I propose to do is this: we haven't spent fifty pounds of the sum Miss Leigh left to pay for tracing her niece; let us hand the balance over to Miss Glennie; she will be highly delighted, and go off quite contented; meanwhile my man will keep an eye on her, and it'll be hard if sooner or later he doesn't find out the flaw in her case."

"What makes you so certain there is a flaw?"

"Because she protests too much, and she contradicts herself: one moment she declares



her mother died when she herself was born, then in the same breath she declares her mother had told her of her rich aunt, and brought her up to expect a legacy."

"Where is the father?"

"Dead years ago! She has all the necessary papers; proves her own birth and his death. I tell you, Armstrong, her story is cut and dried perfectly, and yet I'm positive she's no more Miss Tabitha's niece than I am."

"But you had never seen either the girl or her mother."

"Never! but birth must tell in the long run. Now, Lotty Leigh was a lady, and Mr. Glennie, though an out-and-out scamp, came of a first-rate family; this woman can't speak the Queen's English."

"Has Dr. Parker seen her?"

"No; but he's heard of her being found, and wants to ask her to spend a week at Merton House. In pity for his wife, I persuaded him to have her to tea first. I don't think after an hour or two of her society he'll feel so hospitable. He means to ask you to meet her. Now, Dr. Armstrong, all I beg of you is to wait; you need not touch a penny of the money; you can let every farthing of the interest accumulate; but don't pay a cent of it to this woman until we know something more about her."

The invitation to tea was conveyed by the old doctor in person to his young friend.

"It must be Sunday," said Dr. Parker, rather crossly; "Carleton has an idea I shall not care to introduce Miss Glennie to my friends, and we are generally alone on Sundays. It's all a fad of his. I'm not ashamed of people because they are poor, and Lotty's child must be a lady."

"I'll come and gladly," said Paul, promptly. "Mr. Carleton told you, I suppose, he thought we had better say nothing about the money at first."

"Yes, he told me; he's a cautious man; but I dare say it's just as well. It might be a shock to her coming so suddenly."

Paul reached Merton House soon after four. Florence Parker was no longer its ornament; she had left her old house for a neighbouring vicarage only two months before. Her mother was quite alone when Paul was shown into the drawing-room.

"Ah! Dr. Armstrong!" she said, with a half sigh; "you see the nest is forsaken; our birdie has flown away."

"I don't mean to condole with you," said Paul, cheerfully, "because I know in your heart you are glad Mrs. Morton should make any man as happy as you have her father, and she is to live so near, you will see her often."

"What do you think the doctor proposes?—that Miss Glennie should come to us on a long visit to fill Floy's place!"

"No one could do that, and I rather fancy your proposed guest is a good twenty years older than Miss Parker—I mean Mrs. Morton."

"Do you know I am rather dreading her?" said his hostess, gently. "Both my husband and Miss Tabby thought so much of seeing her, and if she does not turn out nice, I shall be quite disappointed."

"Where is the doctor?"

"Called out to an old lady with the gout, but I expect him in every moment."

"Miss Glennie."

The footman made the announcement with the utmost composure, but it was probably the first time he had ushered such a figure as a visitor into his lady's presence. Miss Glennie looked like a well-to-do monthly nurse dressed in her best; she was so stout that Paul began to fear for Mrs. Parker's pretty chairs; her dress of cardinal French merino looked almost burning at the seams, and her black fur cape—far too juvenile a garment—refused to meet at all; she had light hair, darkened by a quantity of pomade; her face matched her dress in hue, and her bonnet, of a cheerful purple, was adorned by a bird of Paradise; amiability, nay, almost fawning

sycophancy, was written on her face, and she took Mrs. Parker's thin hand in both her own, squeezing it so hard that her tight kid gloves split with a loud crack by dint of the exertion.

"It's an 'appy day for me, ma'am," said Charlotte Glennie, warmly, "that sees me restored to my own family. My poor dear pa should have lived to see this 'appy meeting; it would 'ave gladdened his very 'art."

Mrs. Parker looked at Paul, and the very piteousness of the glance brought him to the rescue.

"Pray sit down," and he wheeled the most substantial chair he could find up to the fire. "Perhaps you don't know my name, Miss Glennie: Paul Armstrong, an old friend of your aunt's; Mrs. Parker can hardly claim to be related to you, but her husband and your mother were old friends."

"I've often 'ard my pa speak of 'er," said Miss Glennie, blandly, which compliment perplexed the listeners, since Mrs. Parker had never set eyes on Mr. Glennie.

It was hard, nay, it was almost impossible, to make conversation, especially as both Paul and Mrs. Parker could not help thinking of Miss Tabitha, and wondering what she would have said had this vulgar, middle-aged woman been presented to her as her "little Lotty"; but Dr. Armstrong worked manfully, and Miss Glennie fortunately being one of those people always happy so long as they hear the sound of their own voice, the trio got on far better than might have been expected.

Miss Glennie apologised for her lack of mourning by saying, as she had only heard of her aunt's death three months after it occurred, and she heard that in the highest circle (she said "highest") black was only worn a few weeks, she had not thought it worth while to buy any. She knew nothing of Africa; had left it a mere baby. Her pa brought her home to England and took a public house, but somehow he didn't get on; he never did get on for long together, and he'd been dead now getting on for a dozen years.

"I wonder he never sought out his wife's relations," said Mrs. Parker, quietly. "I should have thought he would have tried to find friends for his daughter before he died."

"My poor pa was that proud," said Charlotte, apologetically, "he never would ask any one for anything, and in those days I'd a young man."

Both her listeners looked steadily on the ground; they dared not meet each other's eyes. At last Mrs. Parker returned to inquire whether Miss Glennie lived alone, and how (this was most delicately put), she supported herself.

"I won't say but it's 'ard work," confessed Charlotte. "I let lodgings to city gents, which is a deal of work and very little pay; but still, one must have one's bite and sup. I'm sure this money Mr. Carleton talks of 'll be quite a godsend. Nine hundred pounds he thinks it 'll be, which 'ld set me up, and keep me as a lady ought to be kept."

Enter the doctor, and Paul, with a great pity at his heart for the shattering of the old man's romance, performed the introduction.

Happily for them Miss Glennie left early. One of her "city gents" indulged that night in a supper party, the hot dainties for which the "girl" could be in no wise trusted to prepare. So very soon after seven she took leave of her dear friends, and departed for Kennington, in which suburb her home was situated.

A dead silence fell on the three. Mrs. Parker would not be the first to speak to her husband of his disappointment. Paul hardly knew what to say; Mr. Carleton admitted Miss Glennie had produced all the proofs of her identity; and yet the lawyer doubted. Paul found himself doubting too.

Dr. Parker broke the stillness by bringing his clenched fist down on the table with a bang.

"I don't believe it," he cried. "You and Carleton may swear it to me on your knees, Paul, if you like, but I'll never believe that woman is Lotty's daughter!"

His wife hit on the very point of the difficulty by her gentle inquiry,—

"But dear, if she is not our old friend's niece, who is she?"

"I don't care!" The old gentleman was getting angry. "She is not Lotty's child."

"I suppose Mr. Glennie had not a sister?" suggested Paul Armstrong. "Depend upon it, if your late visitor is not Charlotte Glennie, she is some one intimately connected with the family."

The doctor shrugged his shoulders.

"Why, Dallas Glennie was an aristocrat to the backbone! An arrant scamp, I grant you; but patrician to his fingernails. Fancy his allowing a daughter of his to allude to him as her 'poor pa'! Fancy his keeping a public-house! It's no use, Paul; I tell you I knew the man and he couldn't have done such a thing. It is as likely to be true as his being too proud to seek out his rich relations. Why, he'd have gone down in the mud and grovelled to anyone who'd give him a bank note."

Mrs. Parker interposed.

"Is she like him?"

"Like him! Of course she isn't; she's no more his daughter than you are!"

"Then, who is she?"

"I don't know. Why does not Carleton find out? What's the good of lawyers if they let their friends be imposed upon? I suppose he'll be idiot enough to let you pay her the fifty thousand pounds, Paul?"

"He wanted me to wait three months. I was very much annoyed at the advice; but I confess now I feel inclined to follow it."

"Three months! You'd wait three years if you took my advice. Then, what's the money she's so set up about?"

"The remainder of the amount Miss Tabitha left to be spent in finding her niece. Mr. Carleton fancies if this was paid to her, and she thought we were quite convinced of her identity, she might be off her guard and betray her real station."

"She's done that already. She's a lodging-house keeper at Kennington. I should like to send some one to lodge in her house, but she's so artful, she never mentioned her address."

"Mr. Carleton must have it."

But Mr. Carleton appealed to, said he had not got it. He wrote to Miss Glennie at a certain road in Brixton, and had quite believed she had lived there. Dr. Parker was so angry about the whole business he wanted the lawyer to pay her nothing. Paul inclined to the belief she had better receive the sum advised by Mr. Carleton, since he thought security would be the best way of making her betray herself.

Meanwhile the lawyer enclosed "Miss Glennie" a cheque for fifty pounds, and informed her there were certain formalities to be gone through before she could touch the rest of the money, and these might, he feared, cause some delay.

The lawyer had rather a hard post of it, for Dr. Parker grumbled at him continually, and would not believe it was impossible to prosecute Miss Glennie, though the old gentleman himself confessed he could prove nothing against her, in fact, every one was at loggerheads, and might have remained so, but for a bright idea which occurred to young Mrs. Morton when she heard the whole story on coming home after her honeymoon.

"Why don't you look for her in the post-office directory? If she keeps a lodging-house she's probably been in the same street for years. Just try and find her out and then Charley can go and ask some question about her apartments. He is used to talking to strange people, you know."

"Mrs. Morton, you are a detective spelt," said Paul, admiringly. "You are quite thrown away on mere domestic life."

"But I don't think so," said the young vicar, smiling. "I'll look in the directory to-morrow; but I have the strangest fancy that I know the lady in whom you are interested already."

"Charley!"

Even the old doctor condescended to prick up his ears and look interested.

"My curate has a brother who lives in lodgings, and because it's cheap and convenient favours Kennington. Young Wells came to his brother's last night, and casually mentioned he had notice to quit because his landlady had come into a fortune. He's rather a droll young fellow, and he gave such a fancy picture of the lady in question and her grammar that it rather impressed me. It seems she consulted him as to whether she ought to wear black when she went to receive the legacy. She neglected his advice, however, because she believed so firmly in the charms of a cardinal merino, which is just the hue of her face."

"It must be our friend," said Paul.

"Wells lives at 6, Pentland-road, Kennington. I can't tell you his landlady's name, but you'll be sure to find him at home any night after nine. Tell him I sent you and he'll give you any information in his power."

"You forget one thing. Having already seen 'Miss Glennie,' won't she suspect something if I suddenly appear at her house?"

"Then I'll go myself."

He did, and the account he brought back made Paul very thankful he had taken Mr. Carleton's advice, and been in no hurry to enrich the lady who claimed to be Miss Tabitha's niece. She had no more right to that name than a stranger, and yet, strange fact, she really was Charlotte Glennie.

Mr. Wells said frankly she was a respectable, hard-working woman. He had lived with her five years and never missed the value of a sixpence. She was a widow. Her husband had been dead (she told him) more than twenty years. He was an idle, worthless fine gentleman, more plague than profit. Her pa had kept a public and had made a little money, but so great was his distrust of Glennie (so the widow alluded to her departed lord) he tied it up in an annuity, so that his Charlotte enjoyed thirty pounds a year, of which nothing could deprive her.

Mrs. Glennie had no children of her own. She had once vaguely alluded to a step-daughter who quarrelled with her and ran away.

It was as clear as daylight. Dallas Glennie's second wife, possessing the same name as her step-daughter, and having in her keeping all the old family papers, had found it very easy to personate her husband's child, and the fraud might have succeeded perfectly but for Mr. Wells.

Of course, Mr. Carleton sent for her at once, and told her he had discovered everything.

She stood her ground firmly; swore she was Charlotte Glennie, and she had never told him she was Dallas Glennie's daughter.

He did not care to quarrel with her, for he thought she might be of use to him.

"Look here, Mrs. Glennie, I believe I could prosecute you for fraud, but I don't wish to. You've had fifty pounds from me already; find your step-daughter and bring her here, and I'll give you three hundred pounds."

"Honour bright?"

"Honour bright!" agreed the lawyer. "Only don't try to take me in a second time. If you attempt to palm off a false heiress on me, I'll have the law on you; remember that!"

"Lotty was always an aggravating creature," said the step-mother, dejectedly; "what if I find she's dead?"

"Well, give me proofs of it and the cheque's yours just the same; only remember, Mrs. Glennie, we want certainty, not doubt; you must either produce your step-daughter here in this office, or give me proof positive of her death."

"I'll bring her, sir, if she's alive; never fear."

## CHAPTER IV., AND LAST.

PAUL ARMSTRONG ruled in Miss Tabitha's house, and her relations paid court to him, but he never gave them the slightest cause to hope they had gained a footing in his affections.

The young doctor seemed strangely altered. Martha complained that prosperity did him no good; he was just killing himself with hard work. She did not guess the change in her master was caused by the darts of Cupid's archery. For the first time in his life Paul Armstrong was in love.

And he had taken the disease badly, as most men do when they are hard on thirty before they go through the fever.

He never knew how it began; he could not tell when he was first conscious of it; only when the December snow lay thick on the ground he knew there was something without which his beautiful house, his professional success, ay, and even his useful career, could not content him, and that something was the heart of Helen Fortescue.

He had not seen much of her, counting by hours and minutes, and yet it seemed to him he knew her thoroughly and had known her for years.

Dorothy was still his patient; indeed, he had given up now speaking of the time when she would be well.

Helen knew that the only thing left now was to smooth her sister's path to the grave.

Dolly was not a grateful person; to the sister who devoted heart and life to her she was capricious and complaining; to the doctor who gave her his best skill she was wilful and disobedient.

It seemed as though the girl's life had got warped somehow by her unhappy marriage, and all that was best and noblest in her lay buried with her baby.

Nell never complained; she worked early and late; she sat up at night to tend her sister if Dolly felt worse; she seemed as though trying to compress the service of years into the little time which remained for her to keep her darling; her cheek grew wan, her sweet eyes tired and heavy, yet in Paul Armstrong's opinion she was more beautiful every day.

He never told her so; her loneliness, her utter friendlessness, prevented his speaking a single word which would make her embarrassed in his presence.

He came to see Dorothy three or four times a week. He sent her hot-house grapes and flowers, game, and even wine from Miss Tabitha's cellar, assuring Nell, when she remonstrated, the things were of no use to him; it was a charity to help him get rid of them.

The only time he ever spoke even a hint of his admiration was when once, about a month after their acquaintance began, Helen, with burning cheeks, spoke to him about his bill.

"Your sister is very delicate," said Paul, simply; "medicine and a doctor's care can't do much for her, but they can do something. I am positive you deny yourself already for her sake; your whole life is a sacrifice to her; then why not let me bestow on her a few idle minutes. Miss Fortescue, let this question rest; leave me free to come and see your sister when I think she needs me, without the worry of thinking that every time you see me you are adding another trifle to the enormous bill which in your imagination you see me some time sending you."

"I never thought that of you," said Nell, gently; "but, oh, Dr. Armstrong, how kind you are."

And before long she was thankful they had had that conversation, for Dorothy grew worse. It took every penny of Nell's earnings to provide her with what she needed, and to pay a doctor would have been simply impossible.

No wonder there were lines about Paul Armstrong's face. No wonder people said he had grown graver since his good fortune; he had to endure the pain of seeing the girl he loved suffer poverty and hardship and be powerless to aid her.

He was rich, he might give Dorothy medical skill and invalid dainties, but he dared not present her sister with a winter dress or a warm mantle.

He had to ride in his brougham and know that Nell was trudging through the snow in her shabby gown and threadbare jacket. He would have spoken out and risked all but for one thought.

If he once became Nell's rejected lover they could not meet evening after evening at Dorothy's bedside, and he knew that for her sister to miss his care would be more pain to Nell than any hardships for herself.

And with the December snows came the sound of Robert Wilmore's wedding bells.

Paul read the announcement in the papers, and wondered if the news had reached War-den-road, and how Nell bore it. For himself he was almost thankful. It seemed one barrier removed between him and his darling. If he knew anything of Helen, she was too noble to love another woman's husband.

"Why are you so grave?" asked Miss Fortescue that evening, as she followed him to Mrs. Gibbs' little parlour to hear his opinion of Dolly. "Has anything troubled you, Dr. Armstrong?"

He shook his head.

"I believe I was thinking of you, and wondering whether it would be kind or cruel to keep from you something I heard to-day."

"I would much rather know the worst. Oh! have you heard of Dolly's husband? Is he coming here?"

"Don't tremble so," said Paul, almost irritably. "I've heard nothing of Dart, and it's my belief he's gone to America long ago."

"Then what is it?"

"Mr. Wilmore was married yesterday—it is in to-day's papers."

"I wonder why they put it off," said Nell, simply. "I thought it was to be in June."

"Don't you mind?"

"Mind!" she met his glance fearlessly. "Why should I? I think Alice very well suited to him, and I hope he will be kind to her."

"But he was your lover?"

Nell hesitated.

"I thought he loved me," she said, slowly, "and I was so lonely it made me happy just to be loved; but the last time I saw him I knew I had been mistaken. He loved himself better far than me, and he was hard. He had no pity for sorrow or misfortune. Dr. Armstrong, poor Dolly thinks she has wrecked my happiness, but I shall be grateful to her all my life for saving me from becoming Mr. Wilmore's wife. The awakening from my mistake was sharp enough, but I have never once regretted it."

"Because you are an angel."

She shook her head.

"Because I could not trust him, and love without trust is dead."

"Miss Fortescue," began Paul, slowly, "don't you think we both lead very lonely lives—you and I?"

"You have a great many friends," said the girl, quietly, "and I—I have Dolly."

"But friends cannot fill my heart, and Dolly must soon leave you. Miss Fortescue—Nell, forgive my rashness, but I can keep silent no longer. When your sister leaves you will you let me try and comfort you for her loss—will you come to me, Nell, and be my wife?"

"Your wife?"

"Even so, child! I am not good at speaking of such things, but I love you with all my heart and soul. I will guard you so far as love can from all care and sorrow if only you will be my wife."

"Think of the gulf between us," said Nell. "You are rich and prosperous; I am alone in the world."

"There is no gulf love cannot cross, and until last August I was poor enough. Nell, I have longed to speak to you for weeks, but I feared your heart was Wilmore's, and you are so gentle, I thought if you refused me, you would not like me to come here to see Dolly."



Nell looked up into his face.

"Do you know that I am just a copying clerk at a law stationer's? do you know that I haven't a friend?"

"I know that you have worked nobly for your sister, and I long for the time when you can begin to rest. Nell, can't you try to care for me, dear? I am a rough fellow, but I would be all tenderness to you."

"Listen!" interrupted Nell; "bend down your ear. I think I have loved you always; ever since you left your tea to come out with me, an utter stranger, into the cold, wet streets."

"Then you will say 'Yes,' Nell?"

"You will let me stay with Dolly," pleaded Nell; "I could not leave her."

"I will never ask you to, but dear, Dolly cannot be with you long; a few days, a week at most, my child, and you will be alone—no, not alone, love! for I want you to promise to be my wife," he urged, "because then I can guard you better. I have some kind friends, Nell, who will take care of you for my sake. I want you to let me tell them you are my fiancée, and then when all is over I can take you to them until we can be married. I can't leave you here alone, dear, when Dolly leaves you."

It was a proud and happy man who walked an hour later into Mrs. Parker's drawing-room, and—(the old doctor being out)—confided his story to her.

Mrs. Parker looked at Paul with dim eyes. It is just exactly like you," she said, when he had finished; "I only wonder I never guessed it, for you have altered tremendously lately. My naughty Floy always said it would be the making of you to fall in love."

"Then please tell her I am 'made.' Dear Mrs. Parker, you will go and see my Nell, won't you? You won't think less of her because she lives in one room and works hard to keep her sister?"

"You must stop that, Paul."

"I've wanted to stop it ever since last August," growled Paul, "but I don't see how. Nell's a lady, Mrs. Parker; she wouldn't take money even from me."

"I will go to-morrow," said Mrs. Parker, kindly. "Do you mean the sister is dangerously ill?"

"So much so that it is only a question of days."

"And then Miss Fortescue must come to us."

"But the doctor?"

"I generally have my own way," confessed Mrs. Parker, "and I shall explain to him that as I've promised to have Miss Charlotte Glennie on a long visit when she is found, he can't object to my asking a guest of my own meanwhile. By the bye, has anything been heard of the heiress?"

"Nothing."

"I don't believe she ever will be found. Depend upon it, Paul, you will never get rid of Miss Tabitha's money."

When Mrs. Parker went to Warden-read the next day, she found that Death had been before her.

Poor Dorothy had passed away in the night, and Paul's little love was indeed—save for himself—alone in the world.

"You must come home with me," said Mrs. Parker to Nell, whose sweet face won her heart at once, though she wondered what her husband would say to the threadbare dress. "I have told Dr. Armstrong you must be my guest until you go to the Shrubberies."

"But—"

"My dear, you owe something to Paul; he will expect to see you often, and he couldn't come here now."

Nell's eyes filled.

"I am not worthy of him," she said, simply; "but oh! I love him so, Mrs. Parker. Did you ever see anyone so noble?"

The elder lady smiled, not unkindly.

"My dear, he thinks you worthy, and I have a great regard for Paul's opinion, so I am quite ready to believe he is right. His has

been a very lonely life, and he needs a wife to brighten it. He is rich enough and clever enough to satisfy most men, but I fancy he needs something more to make him happy."

And then with kind, womanly sympathy she spoke of Dorothy, and persuaded the forlorn sister to bid adieu to the humble lodgings and return with her to Merton House.

"We are very quiet people, dear, but I think we can make you feel at home; and I promised Paul to plead his cause. You are both so much alone in the world, you would not want a grand wedding. I don't see why your sister's death should keep you apart. I think you might put off your black dress for one day, and make Paul happy."

Dr. Parker had been very angry at his young colleague's romance, and disposed to blame his wife for aiding and abetting him.

"Some uneducated London shop-girl to stay with us! I wonder what you'll let yourself be persuaded into next?"

Mrs. Parker had felt too doubtful of Miss Fortescue herself to remonstrate very much with her husband; but when she had seen Nell she felt quite ready to "sit upon" the doctor to any extent.

"Well," he said, crossly—he was getting in years, and hated strangers—pursuing his wife into her own sitting-room as soon as he came in, "what is she like?"

"She is charming! Really, dear, I don't think I could have chosen a nicer wife for Paul myself. Her father was a clergyman, and she was brought up in an orphan asylum."

"Ugh!" grunted the doctor. "Red hair and freckles. I hope she doesn't squint."

But when he saw Nell, dressed in the pretty mourning his wife had chosen for her, he changed his mind, and before dinner was over had become quite in favour of the match.

"You'll have the prettiest home in Clapham, my dear," he said, when he had come to the drawing-room for his cup of coffee; "and one of the best women in England lived there. I never want to meet a kinder heart than Miss Tabitha's. It's a strange, old-fashioned name, but it just suited her."

"I like it," said Nell, simply. "It was my mother's."

"Your mother's!" exclaimed the doctor. "Bless me, why I never heard of anyone but my poor old friend being called Tabitha."

"Mamma was christened after an aunt she never saw. Grandpapa was very unfortunate, but he said he started her in life with a good name. She was so good and pretty, it almost broke my father's heart when she died, and he only lingered six months after her."

"And you were not called Tabitha—what a pity?"

"No. Dolly's second name was Tabitha, but she did not like it, and so it was never used. I was christened after mamma too, for my second name is Charlotte."

Dr. Parker seized her hand.

"Good gracious! I have the strangest idea."

"What was your mother's maiden name?"

"Glennie," replied Nell, much perplexed; "but I don't think you can know any of her family, she was an only child."

Mrs. Parker smiled.

"Well," she said, kindly, "do you know that all this while Paul Armstrong has been seeking for you? It was your aunt who left him his fortune and the Shrubberies. I don't think in all the world there could be a more suitable wife for him; but the strangest thing is that it has all come about by accident."

Of course Paul was told the wonderful story, but he did not seem in the least elated, and would evidently quite as soon his darling had remained a penniless girl.

Still, her riches made no difference in his love; and so, when the snowdrops bloomed on Dorothy's grave, "Little Lotty," as old Dr. Parker persisted in calling Nell, became Mrs. Paul Armstrong, and went home a bride to

the Shrubberies, where she and her husband live together happy in their mutual love, and always ready to help other people with Miss TABITHA'S MONEY.

[THE END.]

A FULL-GROWN whale weighs about a hundred tons.

INTELLIGENCE OF WHALES.—Whales are very human and very knowing, too. I have seen those gigantic whale mothers sporting with their calves, and rolling in clumsy play with them, within pistol shot of the schooner. A whale has some senses finer than ours. They seem to have some sort of electric communication between them, though far apart. At times, if one whale, though half a mile from his companions, is struck, the rest seem instantly to know it, and dash madly off. A whale in swimming leaves a slight ooze or streak of oil behind on the water's surface. The whalers call it "the slick." Now, this "slick" does afford some sort of communication to the whale when it is touched by any foreign substance, and the whalers in their boats will avoid crossing it when they see it, for it seems as if it conveyed warning to a whale they are desirous of approaching. The "calf" sometimes lagged a few yards behind the "cow" while our boats were in chase, and if by accident our boat header put his iron into that calf the mother instantly knew it, and then, and not till then, would she turn furiously on the boat. When she was roused man was no match at all for her. For wounding her calf a "cow" chased one of our boats ashore, and for an hour she lay "on and off," blockading their port of safety, and waiting for them to put off, that she might have another whack at them. They did not put off until she had gone.

WONDERS OF THE UNIVERSE.—What assertion will make one believe that in one second of time, one beat of the pendulum of a clock, a ray of light travels over 152,000 miles, and would therefore perform the tour of the world in about the same time that it requires to wink with our eyelids, and in much less than a swift runner occupies in taking a single stride! What mortal can be made to believe, without demonstration, that the sun is almost a million times larger than the earth? And that, although so remote from us, a cannon-ball, shot directly towards it, and maintaining its full speed, would be twenty years in reaching it? Yet it affects the earth by its attraction in an appreciable instant of time! Who would not ask for demonstration when told that a gnat's wing, in its ordinary flight, beats many hundred times in a second, or that there exist animated and regularly organized beings, many thousands of whose bodies laid together would not extend an inch? But what are these to the astonishing truths which modern optical inquiries have disclosed, which teach that every point of a medium through which a ray of light passes is affected with a succession of periodical movements, regularly recurring at equal intervals, no less than five hundred millions of millions of times in a single second. That it is by such movements communicated to the nerves of the eye, that we see. Nay, more, that it is the difference in the frequency of their recurrence which affects us with the sense of the diversity of colour? That, for instance, in acquiring the sensation of redness, our eyes are affected four hundred and eighty-two millions of millions of times; of yellowness, five hundred and forty-two millions of millions of times; and of violet, seven hundred and seven millions of millions of times per second? Do not such things sound more like the ravings of madmen than the sober conclusions of people in their waking senses? They are, nevertheless, conclusions to which any one may most certainly arrive who will only be at the trouble of examining the chain of reasoning by which they have been obtained.

## FACETIÆ.

GOING THE ROUNDS OF THE PRESS.—Waltzing.

The pavement of Hades is relaid the first of every January.

LIFE is full of compensation. The tongue of the deaf and dumb man never gets him into trouble.

A CORRESPONDENT wants to know how long girls should be courted. Reply: With a step-ladder.—*American Paper.*

THERE is a Wall-street man so very polite that he takes off his hat when speaking to a lady through the telephone.

MR. BALD: "Al, old boy, what can I give my wife for her birthday? Something very rare." AL: "Give her a look of you hair."

A NEWLY-STARTED paper delicately announces that its charge for marriage notices is "just what the ecstasy of the bridegroom may prompt."

PROUD MOTHER (piqued that her child's advances meet with no response from fair stranger): "Why, baby dear, that's not your grandma."

A WRITER, like a kiss, should be asked for with the eyes alone—and then, when consent is evident, should be taken without unnecessary questions or delay.

"ALL things come to him who waits," says the proverb, but the man who, after waiting half an hour, discovers that the last car has gone, is not a believer in it.

OUR Pessimistic Carker says, with reference to woman's work, that the girl of his boyhood was of the right type, the girl of the future will be merely a type-writer.

MISTRESS (engaging cook): "Have you ever had any experience?" Mrs. Maloney (nurtly): "Experience, is it? Sure I wuz in seven places the pasht three months."

"How did you like the Wagner operas, Clara?" "I enjoyed them immensely. The person back of you who always hums an opera gets left when it comes to Wagner."

MRS. YEAST: "What kind of hand does your husband write?" Mrs. Bacon: "Well, when he is making out the cheque for my weekly allowance, he writes a very cramped hand!"

IT is hard on a young man to spend three months deciding which of two girls he will choose for his wife, and then to find out when he proposes that neither one of them will have him.

"Love goes out at the window when poverty enters the door," but should poverty retire by the door, it is amazing with what celerity love comes scrambling in at the window.

"So you enjoyed your walk, Kate; did you go alone?" Kate: "Oh, yes, mamma, quite alone. Brother: "Then how is it, Kit, you took an umbrella and brought home a walking-stick?"

THERE A.M.—"I say, offshur, isn't that high-stoop brown-stone house mine?" "Yes, Mr. Saunders, that's your house." "Well, I wish when it (he) comes this way 'gain you'd stop it."

MR. BRIEF: "Your uncle has directed in his will that you shall have one cent." Mr. Spendthrift: "Good, kind uncle!" (In sudden alarm) "Are you sure, Mr. Brief, it isn't a counterfeit?"

BROWN: "Your teacher can't be such a mean man as you make out. I notice his son has all the toys he can possibly need." Little Johnnie: "Why, dad, those are what his father takes away from the other boys."

JONES (home rather late after a night at the club): "By Jove, my dear, I can't find my watch. Must have left it in my other coat at the office. Do you know where it is?" Mrs. Jones (with forced calmness): "How should I know, George? I'm no pawnbroker."

AT THE THEATRE.—Blobson (rising excitedly): "Down with the red umbrella in front!" Mrs. Blobson (pulling him back): "For mercy's sake, be quiet. That isn't an umbrella; it's a new spring hat!"

WHAT THEY SAW.—"And I suppose, my dears, you found the pictures at the Academy very beautiful?" "Oh, yes, papa dear! But you should have seen the Duchess of Dumbledon's dress! That was simply divine!"

THAT was quite an excusable slip of the tongue which a young orator made at a meeting recently: "She," he said, referring to Canada, "has completed her twenty-first year; she has attained to her manhood."

ANXIOUS MAMMA: "Little Dick is up-stairs, crying with the toothache." Practical papa: "Take him around to the dentist's." "I haven't any money." "You won't need any money. The toothache will stop before you get there."

"BETTER not wait for Charlie any longer. You know what it is when a fellow is calling on his girl. 'Ah, there they are now! He is just bidding her good-night.'" "All right; let us go and have a game of billiards. We'll just have time."

"MA," said Bobby, "is it wrong for little boys to tie tin kettles to dogs' tails?" "Decidedly wrong, Bobby. I hope you'll never do such a thing as that." "No, indeed, ma," replied Bobby, emphatically; "all I do is to hold the dog."

"You say that you did not know that you were violating the law? Ah! but, my dear sir, ignorance of the law is no excuse to any man." Prisoner: "That's kind o' rough on both of us, ain't it, judge?" Crier: "Order in the Court!"

DAUGHTER, aged thirty-three (fashionably): "Papa, I found a dozen gray hairs in my head this morning and pulled them out. Don't you give me away, though." Father (sighing heavily): "Give you away, Emily? I've abandoned all hope of it."

MRS. NEWMONIE (effusively): "This lovely chair is very ancient, of course; brought over by some of your charming posterity?" Mrs. Oldenayme (coldly): "No, madame; that was just brought home from the manufactory—made by your brother, I believe."

FORN MOTHER: "Little Dick is a perfect gentleman, bless his little heart! Coming down-stairs, he politely stepped aside and allowed Mrs. Heavyweight to precede him. Didn't you, darling?" Little Dick: "Yes, mamma; I was 'fraid she might stumble."

SON: "Pa, why does God make it rain?" Pa: "My dear little boy, God makes it rain that the corn and fruit will ripen." "Well, what does He make it rain on the water for, where there is no corn or fruit?" "Go to bed, or I'll turn you over my knee, you little scamp."

MARY: "George, I have heard you spoken of frequently as a successful business man?" "I am that. Why?" "Well, considering the fact that you have been visiting me for three years, I think you should maintain your reputation and talk business." He maintained his reputation.

"LET'S see," he said, as he met a friend at the post-office yesterday, "didn't you have a lawsuit the other day?" "I did." "Who beat?" "The other man." "And are you going to marry it up?" "Oh, no. I settled it." "How?" "After court adjourned I gave him the alfredest licking a man ever got, and I don't want to be mean and appeal the case besides."

JONES: "Did you read the account of our picnic in the paper last evening?" Brown: "No, I haven't looked at a newspaper for ten days." Jones: "Not reading the papers? How can you do without them?" Brown: "Well, you see I found a purse containing money and I'm afraid I'll see it advertised if I read the papers, and it wouldn't do to be dishonest, you know."

WE have heard of men engraving the Lord's prayer on a five cent piece; but a New York poet has excelled this feat. He has written a poem "On a Look of Washington's Hair."

SEARCHING SMALL BOY: "Daddy, why didn't he tell a lie when his father asked him about the cherry tree?" Cynical parent: "Hm, guess he was getting one ready, boy, but I s'pose he hadn't time to hatchet."

THERE is nothing like a tranquil mind in journalism. A London daily in commenting upon the appalling disaster at Johnstown, where so many lives were lost, can only evolve this reflection: "We cannot do these things in the Old Country on the American scale of magnificence."

"DEAR me! this is so annoying!" said Mr. Haggerty, impatiently. "I've looked all over the house for my pipe, and can't find it anywhere." "Did you look in your mouth?" asked Mrs. Haggerty, regarding him with a smile. "No, by George! And it's there, too," said Haggerty.

MRS. GLADYS: "You appeared very abruptly with your errand a while ago. You must not come so suddenly into the room when Mr. Smithers is spending the evening with me." Bridget: "Sudden! And is it sudden ye call it and me at the haybale a full three-quarters of an hour?"

WHAT is a kiss? is a question which has agitated the world for centuries. The great problem is solved at last! Dr. Henry Gibbons, in a recent lecture at San Francisco, described a kiss as "the anatomical juxtaposition of two orbicularis oris muscles in a state of contraction." There!

GOOD SOUL: "I grievously regret you are to leave our church, dear pastor." Pastor (humbly): "You should not grieve. No doubt the Lord will send you a better servant to fill my place." "No, no, sir. We've had nine since I've lived in this parish, and each one has been worse than the last."

A YOUNG fellow at Swansea was asked by the Chairman of Quarter Sessions what he did for beer on Sundays. "Well," said he, "sometimes I get it over night, sometimes I do without; when I want it badly, and have not got it, I do my three miles and get it." And most people will think he deserves it.

"WHAT is the use of the white patch on a rabbit's tail?" This question has been recently answered by a learned man at a learned gathering. He said, "it is useful for and used by one rabbit to signal to another—perhaps army signalling may receive a useful hint from nature in her wise ways."

A MIDDLE-AGED woman who had just slipped into a seat in a street car, made vacant for her by a gentleman, having neglected to thank him, was asked by her little daughter who was with her why she had not done so. "My dear," whispered her mother, "people don't stand on ceremony in street cars." "Oh! I see how it is," remarked the little one quite audibly, "the gentlemen stand anyway, without the ceremony."

HERE is a scintillation of unconscious humour from a crowded street. A little girl of two or three years had been lost, and was crying most bitterly, and would not tell any of those who asked her what was her name or address. Seeing the position of affairs, a benevolent old gentleman said kindly to her: "My dear, won't you tell me your name? Do try and recollect. It can't be so very long since you were baptised."

"JOHN, wake up! I hear a noise in the kitchen. There's somebody in the house!" (Jumping out of bed) "Don't be afraid, Maria. I'll drive him out! Be calm, darling!" "Don't go down that steep stairway with your revolver cocked, John. It might go off before you are ready." (Crawling back into bed.) "Mrs. Billus, if you haven't any confidence in my management of burglars you can take the revolver and go down yourself."



## SOCIETY.

THE latest eccentricity in the evening costume of the *jeunesse dorée* appears to be the wearing of a white tie with a thin edging of scarlet.

THE bridal veil of the Princess Louise of Augustenburg, the sister of the German Empress, who is betrothed to Prince Frederick Leopold of Prussia, has been made in Silesia, and four hundred women have been working on it for two months. It is three metres long, and one a half metres wide.

PRINCE ALBERT VICTOR signs himself "Edward," but that is for the intimate few.

THERE is a refreshing variety in the superlatives of actors and other public performers. It is stated of Madame Albert, the prima donna, that she will never travel without a portrait group of the Queen and Princess Beatrice. She chooses to regard it as a charm.

AN old Colonial statute has been discovered in New Jersey, still unrevoked, which provides "that all women, of whatever age, profession, or rank, whether maids or widows, who shall, after this Act, impose upon or betray into matrimony any of His Majesty's subjects, by virtue of scents, cosmetics, washes, paints, artificial teeth, false hair, or high-heeled shoes, shall incur the penalty now in force against witchcraft and like misdemeanours."

THE old story of Prince Albert Victor's marriage to Princess Victoria of Teck is again revived. It seems a great pity, as the two young people like each other, that it should not be allowed. Princess Victoria is as much an English Princess as any one can be. She is pretty, nice, and popular. She was born in England, and has been brought up here, and if there are any drawbacks they are only pecuniary ones, and those the country need not consider.

WHEN the Emperor William goes to Osborne, he will find in the garden which opens from the carriage drive, near the flag tower, a magnificent myrtle, which cannot fail to arrest his attention, and this great shrub was originally a sprig from his mother's wedding bouquet.

MAN milliners are on the increase in every city in Europe. They are now employed in all the millinery establishments of London and Paris. It is said to be absolutely necessary it should be so in order to restore the lost balance; and, since the medical profession has been invaded by women, the millinery trade has been in its turn usurped by men.

THE musical laugh, as taught in schools of polite deportment, must now retire in favour of the latest educational novelty. It is now considered necessary to teach girls how to eat oranges with fastidious grace and ease, in order, I suppose, that future suitors, perhaps contented with every other point, may not retire in dismay, after contemplating their fair ones devouring oranges with the peel on. If you have mastered the art of consuming that fruit elegantly, and can teach the same, a money-making career may open up, if ever you lack funds.

THE Shah is probably the most restless man on the face of the earth. Not only is he always afraid of being assassinated, but another reason for the frequent and sudden movements of the Shah is his intense devotion to the chase. When hunting and shooting—and here, he is remarked, His Majesty is a first-rate shot with a rifle—the King of Persia is happy; and, in fact, the nomadic existence of his ancestors is almost necessary to him. Swarthier than most of his subjects, of middle height, his appearance is so well-known since his visits to Europe that it hardly needs description. Very short-sighted, he is seldom without his spectacles, and until he opens his mouth he gives rather the idea of a mild Hindu.

## STATISTICS.

WE have one doctor to every 1,450 of the population.

THIRTEEN of every hundred inhabitants of this country are under five years old.

THERE are nine vernacular papers in Wales, returning handsomer profits, in proportion to the population, than in any country in the world.

MANY creatures eat more than their own weight of food daily; the spider, for instance, consumes a daily amount equal to twenty-six times its own weight.

THERE are as many beehouses and gin-palaces in London as would, if their fronts were placed side by side, reach from Charing Cross to Portsmouth, a distance of seventy-three miles!

## GEMS.

LIFE is history, not poetry.

ARGUMENT may not be criticism, but sometimes the latter sounds very much like the former.

REASON cannot show itself more reasonable than to cease reasoning on things that are above reasoning.

THERE is no house so small that it has not room for love; there is no castle so large that it cannot be filled with it.

THERE is no surer mark of the absence of the highest moral and intellectual qualities than a cold reception of excellence.

YOU may depend upon it that he is a good man whose intimate friends are all good, and whose enemies are characters decidedly bad.

WHEN bad men combine, the good must associate, else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle.

THERE can be no truer test of the noble and heroic, in any individual, than the degree in which he possesses the faculty of distinguishing heroism from absurdity.

IT is worth realizing that there is no such thing as commonplace life or uninteresting circumstances. They are so only because we do not see into them—do not know them.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

BREAD CAKE.—Grate some crumb of bread, and throw it into boiling milk, and stir it over the fire till it all boils. Let it boil a few minutes, then stir in a piece of butter, sugar, lemon peel grated, and some nutmegs, and when well mixed pour it all into a well-buttered mould, and bake it till of a nice colour, when it should be turned out, and served with vanilla sugar sifted over it.

"GINGER CHAMPAGNE" is made in the following manner:—Add forty pounds of ginger, cut in small pieces, to sixty gallons of water, and allow it to boil gently for half-an-hour, carefully removing any froth that may arise. Cool the liquor as soon as possible, and when at a blood-heat (100 degrees Fahrenheit) add nine pounds of finely-chopped raisins and the juice of six dozen lemons. Allow the liquid to ferment, and after standing a month bottle it. If desired, the amount of ginger may be reduced to suit the taste.

EGG SANDWICH.—Boil three fresh eggs for twenty minutes, plunge into cold water. When cold, take off the shells. Pound both the yolks and the whites in a mortar, adding salt and pepper to taste, three ounces of butter, and three dessert-spoonfuls of cream. Keep on pounding the eggs while these ingredients are being mixed in, and the white must be almost as fine as the yolks. Spread thin bread and butter all the pieces the same size and shape. Put the egg mixture rather thick on one piece; cover, cut, and serve as above.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

IT is a mistake to mix chilled milk with fresh, as the latter will be injured by the former.

A PARISIAN novelty is porous glass; by its means rooms are kept cool without draught, and glasses empty without drinking.

IN Galway it is considered so unlucky to catch sight of a fox that fishermen will not put to sea if they notice one while going to their boats.

AT the top of the Eiffel Tower, for a fee, specially prepared note paper, dated from the summit of the tower, is provided, and the writer can have the letter posted on the spot.

THE camel is the only animal that cannot swim. It is an extraordinary fact that the moment it loses its footing in a stream it turns over, and makes no effort to save itself from drowning.

GORETH says that no one should undertake to write a novel till past forty. Were this advice followed what a deal of trash in flashy bindings would cease to decorate the book stalls and library shelves.

If you want knowledge, you must toil for it; if food, you must toil for it; and if pleasure, you must toil for it. Toil is the law. Pleasure comes through toil, and not by self-indulgence and indolence. When a man gets to love work, his life is a happy one.

EVERYONE who takes the slightest interest in natural history will be sorry to learn that the kangaroo is in danger of being extinguished. Its skin is so valuable that large numbers of young kangaroos are killed, and high authorities are of opinion that, unless the process is stopped, Australians will soon have seen the last specimen of this interesting animal.

IT is a curious fact that so firm in texture is the paper of a genuine Bank of England note that burning can hardly destroy it. The authorities have in a little glazed frame the remnant of a note which was in the great fire of Chicago. Though completely charred and black, the paper holds together, and the note is sufficiently legible to establish its genuineness and to be cashed.

THE French President owes a great deal of his success to the assistance of his wife, a talented woman, lively and well-informed, who left no stone unturned to place M. Carnot in his present position, and when there to help him to fulfil it to the best advantage. Madame Carnot is the daughter of a brilliant man, Dupont White, the translator of Stuart Mill's work into French. She speaks English fluently.

THE Chinese never kiss, but a Chinese mandarin who has travelled in western nations has attempted to instruct the benighted Celestials. He says: "Kissing is a form of courtesy which consists of presenting the lips to the lower part of the chin and making a sound." Again: "Children, when visiting their seniors, apply their mouth to the left or right lips of the elder with a smacking noise." It is to be feared that this matter-of-fact description of the process is hardly likely to lead to its naturalization in the Middle Kingdom.

THIS is how Edison goes to work when he wants to perfect one of the wonderful instruments with which he intends, in a very literal sense, to electrify the world. A year and a half ago he found himself at a standstill for something sufficiently tough and durable to form the carbon loops of his incandescent light, till he bethought him of a peculiar kind of bamboo to be found only in the wilds of South America. An emissary was at once dispatched to make the necessary search, and now, after a year's incredible suffering and adventures, the discovery has been made, and so another of the electric light problems has been solved.

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**HOME.**—Sound travels faster in warm air than in cold.

**COOK.**—Goose-grease, when mixed with cocoa-butter, forms an admirable basis for ointment.

**CONNER.**—Pinch them out with small tweezers, a dozen or so daily, till all are eradicated.

**LIZBIE.**—For a grandparent, nine months—three in craps, three in black, three half-mourning.

**SOLDIER'S GIRL.**—The pay of a private in the British army is three times as high as that of one in the French.

**WORK.**—Every sewing machine seems to have its own special make of needles, and it will be wisest for you to send direct to the maker.

**OLD READER.**—Black lace covers of the thin light type of Chantilly will be used, but more as fichus and small veils than round the neck.

**A. B.**—You must continue the payments to the child's legal guardian, whoever that may be, during the whole period appointed in the registration order.

**BLUE.**—There are 10,000 children in connection with the Norway Total Abstinence Society, and, with adults, a total membership of 75,000, of whom 8,000 are Good Templars.

**HALF BROTHER.**—Settle the family dispute among yourselves. It seems probable that if your wife loves you, no protestation to the contrary on the part of her parents will prevent her from returning to your side.

**H. S.**—Good writing does not fit a person for holding the position of a book-keeper any more than one swallow makes a summer. A thorough understanding of the art is the prime requisite; handwriting is a secondary consideration.

**DICK.**—Soot falls down the chimney before a storm because the air at that time contains more moisture. Soot is hygroscopic—that is, it absorbs the moisture from the air, and, becoming heavier, detaches itself from the sides of the chimney.

**LOVER OF FASHION.**—Floral bonnets are the fashion. They are made on tulle shapes drawn on wires, and sold ready in all colours. Bricings are hardly seen since the warm weather has set in. Black lace draped over shot silk or over green silk is worn, but not all black lace.

**AMY S.**—The lines  
"For men must work and women must weep,  
And the sooner it's over the sooner to sleep,  
And good-bye to the bar and its moaning,"  
are to be found in Charles Kingsley's poem of the "Three Fishers."

**A. K.**—The Royal Tapestry Works at Old Windsor are not, as many suppose, closed. Thanks to the orders now being executed for the corporation, Lord Brassey, and others, the looms are still going, and will continue so for some time to come, but the number of workpeople is reduced to four.

**DISAPPOINTED ANNIE.**—It would be useless to encourage the advances of a man who seems to know so little of his own mind, and is in reality making a plaything of both yourself and lady friend. Treat him as a passing acquaintance, and not as a lover, for such he has not proved himself to be.

**S. K.—1.** The boar-hound, or Ulmer dog, as called by some, is principally used for the purpose of watching warehouses, prisons, banks, breweries, &c. This species of dog has not the same keen scent as the bloodhound, but is very savage toward all but those with whom it is acquainted. 2. Very good writing.

**T. D.**—Long lace mantles are quite fashionable, and are made without lining. If it only requires some slight addition to make of full length, make a yoke top of velvet and jet and set the lace full into it, and draw into waist at back, adding a sash bow of moiré ribbon or a jet ornament. The front to hang loose like a cloak with a jet clasp or ribbon bow.

**J. JARVIS.**—To break off any set habit, such as chewing, smoking, or drinking, the exercise of will-power is absolutely necessary. Make up your mind to abstain from tobacco, and resolutely fight the inclination to return to its use. There is no use of trying the so-called substitutes for the weed, as they almost invariably intensify the wish to obtain the real article.

**WILL'S LOVE.**—A girl of sixteen or seventeen years of age is not, as a general rule, sufficiently developed either physically or mentally, to assume the weighty responsibilities attendant upon matrimony. Wait for three years at least, when you will be better fitted to take charge of a household of your own. If he loves you, there is no reason why he should object to waiting.

**FRETTY JESS.**—A very simple and inexpensive hair-curling liquid is made by adding to one quart of hot (not boiling) water two ounces of borax and one drachm of gum arabic. Stir, and as soon as the ingredients are dissolved, add three tablespoonfuls of strong spirits of camphor. When retiring at night, wet the hair with this solution, and roll it in twists of paper as usual.

**ONE OF A CLUB.**—This column is conducted in the interest of all our readers, and not for the benefit of one individual. Questions of a religious, political or non-sensical nature cannot be answered for want of space, and lack of interest to any one but the person asking them. We would thank our correspondents to bear this fact in mind and not feel slighted if no answer is given them.

**ANXIOUS MOTHER.**—Short sight is due to many causes. Professor Förster, Head Physician of the Royal Eye Hospital in Breslau, maintains that short-sightedness in children is not infrequently due to wearing too tight-fitting collars.

**CLEVER BOY.**—The first quotation may be freely translated: "While we live, let us live in peace and harmony." The other Latin sentence is so poorly constructed as to make a clear translation of it an impossibility. Perhaps the party who wrote it in your album may be able to solve the mystery.

**GERTRUDE.**—The word Mispah is of Hebrew origin, the strict meaning of which is a watch tower, or a place of observation. The sentimental significance is explained in the 49th verse of the 31st chapter of Genesis in these words: "The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another." It is often selected on accounts of its beauty of sentiment for insertion in autograph albums.

**HENRY S.**—Onion juice is useful for gumming paper to metal. The cheaper kind of clock dials used to be printed on paper and then glued to a zinc foundation; but after a very short time paper and metal were apt to part company. Now the zinc is dipped into a strong solution of washing soda, and afterwards washed over with onion juice. If the paper is then pasted on to this, it is almost impossible to separate it from the plate.

**A BELGIAN.**—Louis Napoleon, whose full name was Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, and his title Napoleon III. Emperor of the French, was born at Paris, in the palace of the Tuilleries, April 30, 1808. He was the third son of Louis Bonaparte, brother of the first emperor. In 1827, he went to Calischut, Kent County, and resided there until his death, on the 3rd of January, 1873. His wife, the ex-Empress Eugénie, is still living.

## HER MIND NOT MADE UP YET.

You say that you love me, you offer your heart,  
And you ask in return for my own;  
You speak of a future without pain or cross,  
A future no mortal has known.  
But are you quite certain that I am the one  
To help you to live life aright?  
I would not deceive you, would not disappoint,  
So, don't ask an answer to-night!

I do not distrust you, nor doubt one sweet word  
Of the beautiful things you have said;  
But I think it were better to live far apart,  
Than to see these fair hopes lying dead.  
For wedlock, you know, is a trial of faith,  
Where love makes each shadow seem light,  
So don't think me cruel or cold when I say,  
Oh, don't ask an answer to-night!

For if you insist, I must only say, no,  
Though it breaks my heart thus to decide;  
For I'd rather go lonely and sad here below,  
Than to walk a mistake by your side.  
You see, I but caution, and ask you to wait,  
Until we both know what is right;  
And don't think me heartless, though still I repeat,  
Oh, don't ask an answer to-night!

Oh, don't ask an answer to-night!  
Nay, don't ask an answer to-night!  
Just wait till you're sure my heart is secure,  
And don't ask an answer to-night.

M. B.

**TIM'S LASSIE.**—Burns' famous song, "Comin' Through the Rye," did not have reference to a rye field, but to the small river Rye, in Ayrshire, Scotland, which could be forded. In wading over, however, the lasses had to hold up their petticoats, and it was a favourite pastime for Robbie Burns and mischievous companions to lie in wait for the lasses "comin' thro' the Rye." When they got to mid-stream, the "laddies" would wade out and snatch a kiss from the "lasses," who were unable to resist without dropping their clothes in the water.

**J. HAMES.**—It will be found much cheaper to buy the lager beer than to attempt to make it yourself. The art of brewing consists of five operations: Mashing, boiling, cooling, fermenting and cleaning. The first process is to obtain an infusion of the malt. In the second this infusion is further impregnated with the favour of the hops in the boiling, which is requisite for the preservation of the beer. In the third this decoction or infusion is cooled down to the necessary heat for fermentation, which is excited by the addition of yeast, and which fills it with carbonic acid gas, giving to the liquid the pungent taste for which it is esteemed. The final process consists in filtering, or cleansing, to render it fit for drinking.

**BLUE RIBBON.**—According to a trustworthy authority, the word *testotal* was first used in connection with temperance in September, 1833. An Englishman named Richard Turner, commonly known as "Dicky" Turner, was much given to holding forth in the Lancashire dialect at the meetings of the temperance society instituted at Preston the previous year. In one of his harangues against temperance, he said: "I'll hev nowt to do wi' this moderation-botheration pledge; I'll be root down tee-tee-total forever and ever!" "Well done, Dicky!" said the founder of the society; "that shall be the name of our new pledge." This origin of the expression has been disputed; it being stated that the term is simply a Lancashire phrase for final, thorough or complete. Other authorities contend that it is a cant word formed by reduplication, for the sake of emphasis the initial letter of the adjective total.

**SERVING MAID.**—To make the hands white and delicate, wash them in milk and water for a day or two. At night, just previous to going to bed, rub them well with some palm oil, and put on a pair of woollen gloves. The hands should be thoroughly washed with warm water and soap the next morning, dried and covered with a pair of soft gloves. Always use the purest soap, as that containing lye acts as an irritant to delicate skin.

**MOTHER.**—Since the advent of cloth suits, many tailors throughout this country are engaged in making suits for ladies, but it would be impossible to say how long this fashion will remain in vogue. It would seem as though a boy should turn his attention to some trade better suited to his gender than that of dressmaking, even though he be fired with the desire to emulate gentlemen in that trade. They are but exceptional cases of success in this strictly feminine line of business.

**MARTHA.**—Dandruff arises either from a neglect to give the head that attention to its cleanliness which it requires as much as the face and hands; or it may be the result of a disordered stomach. In the first instance, rub the hair and scalp with a little water, or with weak spirits of wine, thus rendering it white and free from dandruff. Once a week at least wash it thoroughly with lukewarm water and castile soap, being sure to dry perfectly, after which brush it until it becomes soft and glossy.

**CANNY SCOTT.**—The saying, "Help me to salt, help me to sorrow," is common among the Highlanders, and the majority of them always decline the article with a wave of the hand. The popular superstition respecting the spilling of salt being a bad omen, is said to have originated in the fact that in Leonardo da Vinci's celebrated picture of "The Last Supper," Judas Iscariot is represented as overturning the salt. An Italian superstition is to the effect that the spilling of oil at table is sure to bring bad luck in some form to the person causing the accident.

**H. L.**—"Studding-sail" (called by sailors "stunsel") is one set outside the square sails in good weather and when the wind is fair. The word is generally supposed to have been originally "steering-sail," but a better derivation would seem to be from the former name of "sawding-sail." These sails are made of light canvas and roped with light rope. They are on each side, a lower studding-sail, a foretopmast studding-sail, fore and main-topgallant studding-sails, and in some cases a main-topmast studding-sail. In former times they were set on the royal yards.

**REX.**—The gull is a genus of web-footed birds inhabiting the seacoast of all parts of the world. Gulls have great power of wing, flying low in bad weather and high at other times. They are not divers, and the fish caught by them are those which swim near the surface. Their plumage is in a great part white, variously mixed with slate-colour, grey, brown or black. The black-backed gull, the skua and the kittiwake are the principal varieties of this family. The first-mentioned makes its nest of grass in marshy localities, while the other two prefer the narrow edges of rocks upon which to deposit their eggs.

**TRAIKST.**—King Arthur is the name given to a chief of a tribe of ancient Britons, who is supposed to have flourished in the sixth century. His history is surrounded with so much legendary lore that even his existence is doubted by many authorities. Bede, one of England's oldest and greatest historians, fails to make mention of Arthur's name. He is said to have instituted the famous "Knights of the Round Table," and many poets, notably Lord Tennyson, have woven into beautiful verse the romantic legends concerning him.

**EDITH.**—An engaged woman should never indulge in flirtations, although it does not follow that she is to cut herself off from all association with the opposite sex because she has chosen her future husband. She may still have friends and acquaintances, she may receive visits and calls, but she must, under every circumstance, conduct herself in such a manner as to give no offence. The same rules hold good in regard to the gentleman, only that he pays visits instead of receiving them. Neither party should assume a domineering or jealous attitude toward the other. They are neither of them to be shut up away from the rest of the world, but must mingle in society after marriage nearly the same as previous to that time, and take the same delight in friendship. The fact that they have confessed their love to each other should be deemed a sufficient guarantee of faithfulness; for the rest, let there be truth and confidence. Have implicit trust in the lady, and we feel sure she will not abuse it.

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